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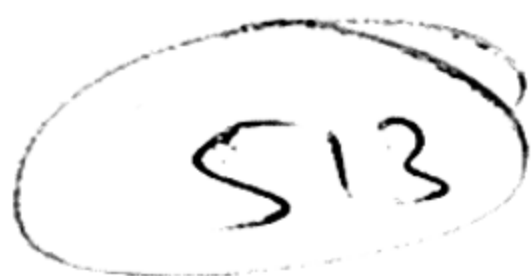
A Choice of  
**KIPLING'S VERSE**  
made by T. S. Eliot

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# A Choice of KIPLING'S VERSE

made by  
T. S. ELIOT

with an essay on  
RUDYARD KIPLING



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## RUDYARD KIPLING

There are several reasons for our not knowing Kipling's poems so well as we think we do. When a man is primarily known as a writer of prose fiction we are inclined—and usually, I think, justly—to regard his verse as a by-product. I am, I confess, always doubtful whether any man can so divide himself as to be able to make the most of two such very different forms of expression as poetry and imaginative prose. I am willing to pay due respect, for instance, to the poetry of George Meredith, of Thomas Hardy, of D. H. Lawrence as part of their *œuvre*, without conceding that it is as good as it might have been had they chosen to dedicate their whole lives to that form of art. If I make an exception in the case of Kipling, it is not because I think he succeeded in making the division successfully, but because I think that, for reasons which it will be partly the purpose of this essay to put forward, his verse and his prose are inseparable; that we must finally judge him, not separately as a poet and as a writer of prose fiction, but as the inventor of a mixed form. So a knowledge of his prose is essential to the understanding of his verse, and a knowledge of his verse is essential to the understanding of his prose. In so far therefore as I concern myself here with his verse by itself, it is only with the aim of restoring it to its place

afterwards and seeing the total work more clearly. In most studies of Kipling that I have read, the writers seem to me to have treated the verse as secondary, and in so doing to have evaded the question—which is, nevertheless, a question that everyone asks—whether Kipling's verse really is poetry; and, if not, what it is.

The starting point for Kipling's verse is the motive of the ballad-maker; and the modern ballad is a type of verse for the appreciation of which we are not provided with the proper critical tools. We are therefore inclined to dismiss the poems, by reference to poetic criteria which do not apply. It must therefore be our task to understand the type to which they belong, before attempting to value them: we must consider what Kipling was trying to do and what he was not trying to do. The task is the opposite of that with which we are ordinarily faced when attempting to defend contemporary verse. We expect to have to defend a poet against the charge of obscurity: we have to defend Kipling against the charge of excessive lucidity. We expect a poet to be reproached for lack of respect for the intelligence of the common man, or even for deliberately flouting the intelligence of the common man: we have to defend Kipling against the charge of being a 'journalist' appealing only to the commonest collective emotions. We expect a poet to be ridiculed because his verse does not appear to scan: we must defend Kipling against the charge of writing jingles. In short, people are exasperated by poetry which they do not understand, and contemptuous of poetry which they understand without effort; just as an audience is offended by a speaker who talks over its head, and by a speaker whom it suspects of talking down to it.

A further obstacle to the appreciation of many of Kipling's poems is their topicality, their occasional character, and their political associations. People are often inclined to disparage poetry which appears to have no bearing on



the situation of to-day; but they are always inclined to ignore that which appears to bear only on the situation of yesterday. A political association may help to give poetry immediate attention: it is in spite of this association that the poetry will be read, if it is read, to-morrow. Poetry is condemned as 'political' when we disagree with the politics; and the majority of readers do not want either imperialism or socialism in verse. But the question is not what is ephemeral, but what is permanent: a poet who appears to be wholly out of touch with his age may still have something very important to say to it; and a poet who has treated problems of his time will not necessarily go out of date. Arnold's *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse* voice a moment of historic doubt, recorded by its most representative mind, a moment which has passed, which most of us have gone beyond in one direction or another: but it represents that moment for ever.

We have therefore to try to find the permanent in Kipling's verse: but this is not simply to dissociate form from content. We must consider the content itself, the social and political attitude in its development; and, making an effort to detach ourselves from the assumptions of our own generation, enquire whether there is something more in Kipling than is expressed by Beerbohm's caricature of the Bank Holiday cornet virtuoso on the spree.

## I

In the selection which follows I have found no place for the earliest of Kipling's published verse: to be precise, the selection begins from page 81 of the Collected Edition. The earlier work is juvenilia, but juvenilia which, having been published in its time and had a success in its time, is essential reading for a full understanding of Kipling's progress. Most of it is what it was intended to be, light reading in an English newspaper in India: it exhibits that same



precocious knowingness about the more superficial level of human weakness that is both effective and irritating in some of his early stories of India. It is obviously the work of a clever young man who might go far in journalism, but neither in feeling nor in rhythm does most of it give any hint that the author would ever write a memorable poem. It is unnecessary to say that it is not poetry: what is surprising and interesting is that it does not pretend to be poetry, that it is not the work of a youth whom anyone would suspect of any aspiration to write poetry. That he is gifted, that he is worth watching, is obvious when you know how young he is: but the gift appears to be only for the ephemeral, and the writer appears to aim at nothing higher.

There were, however, literary influences in the background. We have among his verse a pastiche of *Atalanta in Calydon* made for his own immediate purposes; we remember also that McIntosh Jellaludin (who is introduced as falling over a camel foal while reciting *The Song of the Bower*) on one occasion recited the whole of *Atalanta* beating time with a bedstead leg. There was Kipling's family connection with Pre-Raphaelite society: and Kipling's debt to Swinburne is considerable. It is never an imitation: the vocabulary is different, the content is different, the rhythms are different. There is one early monologue which is much more closely imitated from Browning than anything is imitated from Swinburne: but it is in two poems extremely unlike Browning's in style—*McAndrew's Hymn* and *The 'Mary Gloster'*—that Browning's influence is most visible. Why is the influence of Swinburne and Browning so different from what you would expect? It is due, I think, to a difference of motive: what they wrote they intended to be poetry; Kipling was not trying to write poetry at all.

There have been many writers of verse who have not aimed at writing poetry: with the exception of a few

writers of humorous verse, they are mostly quickly forgotten. The difference is that they never did write poetry. Kipling does write poetry, but that is not what he is setting out to do. It is this peculiarity of intention that I have in mind in calling Kipling a 'ballad-writer' and it will take some time to make clear what I mean by that. For I am extending and also somewhat limiting the meaning of the word 'ballad'. It is true that there is an unbroken thread of meaning connecting the various kinds of verse to which the term 'ballad' has been applied. In the narrative Border Ballad, the intention is to tell a story in what, at that stage of literature, is the natural form for a story which is intended to arouse emotion. The poetry of it is incidental and to some extent unconscious; the form is short rhymed stanzas. The attention of the reader is concentrated on the story and the characters; and the ballad must have a meaning immediately apprehensible by its auditors. Repeated hearings may confirm the first impressions, may repeat the effect, but full understanding should be conveyed at one hearing. The metrical form must be of a simple kind which will not call attention to itself, but repetitions and refrains may contribute an incantatory effect. There should be no metrical complications corresponding to subtleties of feeling that cannot be immediately responded to. At another stage of culture—as in Anglo-Saxon and in the elaborate forms of Welsh—poetry develops a conscious virtuosity, requiring a virtuosity of appreciation on the part of the audience: the forms impose upon the bard restrictions and obstacles in overcoming which he exhibits his skill. It must be remembered that this sophistication is not only present in what we call 'modern' literature or in the later stages of development of classical literatures such as those of Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, Persian, or Chinese: it is a stage sometimes reached in the poetry of peoples of lower cultures. And on the other hand, ballad verse is not simply a stage in historical development: the ballad persists and develops

in its own way, and corresponds to a permanent level of enjoyment of literature. There is always a potential public for the ballad: but the social conditions of modern society make it difficult for the good ballad to be written. It is perhaps more difficult now than it was at the time when *Barrack Room Ballads* were written: for Kipling had at least the inspiration and refreshment of the living music-hall.

In order to produce the contemporary ballad, it is of no particular help to hold advanced social views, or to believe that the literature of the future must be a 'popular' literature. The ballad must be written for its own sake and for its own purposes. It would be a mistake, also, and a supercilious kind of mistake, to suppose that the audience for balladry consists of factory workers, mill hands, miners and agricultural labourers. It does contain people from these categories, but the composition of this audience has, I suspect, no relation to any social and economic stratification of society. The audience for the more highly developed, even for the more esoteric kinds of poetry is recruited from every level: often the uneducated find them easier to accept than do the half-educated. On the other hand, the audience for the ballad includes many who are, according to the rules, highly educated; it includes many of the powerful, the learned, the highly specialised, the inheritors of prosperity. I do not mean to suggest that the two audiences ought to be, or must be, two worlds: but that there will be one audience capable only of what I may call ballad attention, and a smaller audience capable of enjoying both the ballad and the more difficult forms of poetry. Now it is to the ballad attention that Kipling addresses himself: but that does not mean that all of his poems appeal only on that level.

What is unusual about Kipling's ballads is his singleness of intention in attempting to convey no more to the simple minded than can be taken in on one reading or hearing.



They are best when read aloud, and the ear requires no training to follow them easily. With this simplicity of purpose goes a consummate gift of word, phrase, and rhythm. There is no poet who is less open to the charge of repeating himself. In the ballad, the stanza must not be too long and the rhyme scheme must not be too complicated;<sup>1</sup> the stanza must be immediately apprehensible as a whole; a refrain can help to insist upon the identity within which a limited range of variation is possible. The variety of form which Kipling manages to devise for his ballads is remarkable: each is distinct, and perfectly fitted to the content and the mood which the poem has to convey. Nor is the versification too regular: there is the monotonous beat only when the monotonous is what is required; and the irregularities of scansion have a wide scope. One of the most interesting exercises in the combination of heavy beat and variation of pace is found in *Danny Deever*, a poem which is technically (as well as in content) remarkable. The regular recurrence of the same end-words, which gain immensely by imperfect rhyme (*parade* and *said*) gives the feeling of marching feet and the movement of men in disciplined formation—in a unity of movement which enhances the horror of the occasion and the sickness which seizes the men as individuals; and the slightly quickened pace of the final lines marks the change in movement and in music. There is no single word or phrase which calls too much attention to itself, or which is not there for the sake of the total effect; so that when the climax comes—

‘What’s that that whimpers over’ead?’ said Files-on-Parade,  
‘It’s Danny’s soul that’s passin’ now,’ the Colour-Sergeant said.

<sup>1</sup> Though Kipling could manage even so difficult a form as the *sestina*: see p. 45.

(the word *whimper* being exactly right) the atmosphere has been prepared for a complete suspension of disbelief.

It would be misleading to imply that all of Kipling's poems, or at least all that matter, are 'ballads': there is a great variety of kinds. I mean only that the approach to the understanding of what he was trying to do, in all his varied verse, is through the ballad motive. The best introduction, for my present purpose, is to call attention to a dozen or so particular poems representing his different types. For the reader to whom the ballad approach to poetry is the most natural, there is no need to show that Kipling's verse reaches from time to time the intensity of 'poetry': for such readers it is more useful to discuss the content, the view of life, and to overcome the prejudices which they may entertain against any verse which has a different subject matter or a different point of view from that which they happen to accept: to detach it, furthermore, from irrelevant association with subsequent events and attitudes. That I shall attempt in the next section. In choosing the examples which follow here, I have in mind rather the reader who, if he believes that Kipling wrote 'political jingles', stresses the word *jingles* rather than the word *political*.

The first impression we may take from inspection of a number of the poems chosen to show the variety, is that this variety is suspiciously great. We may, that is, fail to see in it more than the virtuosity of a writer who could turn his hand to any form and matter at will: we may fail to discern any unity. We may be brought to admit that one poem after another does, in one way or another, have its 'poetic' moment, and yet believe that the moments are only accidental or illusory. It would be a mistake to assume that a few poems can be chosen which are 'poetry', and that the rest, by implication, need not be read. A selection made in this way would be arbitrary, because there is no handful of poems which can be so isolated from the rest;

it would be misleading because the significance of the 'poems' would be lost except with the background of the 'verse', just as the significance of the verse is missed except in the context of the prose. No part of Kipling's work, and no period of his work, is wholly appreciable without taking into account the others: and in the end, this work, which studied piecemeal appears to have no unity beyond the haphazard of external circumstances, comes to show a unity of a very complicated kind.

If, therefore, I call particular attention to *Danny Deever* as a barrack-room ballad which somehow attains the intensity of poetry, it is not with the purpose of isolating it from the other ballads of the same type, but with the reminder that with Kipling you cannot draw a line beyond which some of the verse becomes 'poetry'; and that the poetry, when it comes, owes the gravity of its impact to being something over and above the bargain, something more than the writer undertook to give you; and that the matter is never simply a pretext, an occasion for poetry. There are other poems in which the element of poetry is more difficult to put one's finger on, than in *Danny Deever*. Two poems which belong together are *McAndrew's Hymn* and *The 'Mary Gloster'*. They are dramatic monologues, obviously, as I have said, owing something to Browning's invention, though metrically and intrinsically ballads. The popular verdict has chosen the first as the more memorable: I think that the popular verdict is right, but just what it is that raises *McAndrew's Hymn* above *The 'Mary Gloster'* is not easy to say. The rapacious old ship owner of the latter is not easily dismissed, and the presence of the silent son gives a dramatic quality absent from McAndrew's soliloquy. One poem is no less successful than the other. If the McAndrew poem is the more memorable, it is not because Kipling is more inspired by the contemplation of the success of failure than by that of the failure of success, but because there is greater poetry in the



subject matter. It is McAndrew who creates the poetry of Steam, and Kipling who creates the poetry of McAndrew.

We sometimes speak as if the writer who is most consciously and painstakingly the 'craftsman' were the most remote from the interests of the ordinary reader, and as if the popular writer were the artless writer. But no writer has ever cared more for the craft of words than Kipling: a passion which gives him a prodigious respect for the artist of any art, and the craftsman of any craft<sup>1</sup> and which is perhaps involved in his respect for Free Masonry. The problems of the literary artist constantly recur in his stories:<sup>2</sup> in *Wireless*, for instance, where the poor consumptive chemist's assistant is for a night identified with Keats at the moment of writing *The Eve of St. Agnes*; in *The Finest Story in the World*, where Kipling takes the trouble to provide a very good poem, in rather free verse (the *Song of the Galley Slaves* in this volume) and a very bad poem in regular verse, to illustrate the difference between the poem which forces its way into the consciousness of the poet and the poem which the writer himself forces. The difference between the craft and the art of poetry is of course as difficult to determine as the difference between poetry and balladry. It will not help us to decide the place of Kipling in poetry: we can only say that Kipling's craftsmanship is more reliable than that of some greater poets, and that there is hardly any poem, even in the collected works, in which he fails to do what he has set out to do. The great poet's craft may sometimes fail him: but at his greatest moments he is doing what Kipling

<sup>1</sup> *The Bull That Thought* in the bull-ring 'raged enormously; he feigned defeat; he despaired in statuesque abandon, and thence flashed into fresh paroxysms of wrath—but always with the detachment of the true artist who knows that he is but the vessel of an emotion whence others, not he, must drink'.

<sup>2</sup> In *Proofs of Holy Writ* (a story published in the *Sussex* edition only), Shakespeare and Jonson discuss a problem of choice of words put before them by one of the translators of the King James Bible. See also the poem on Shakespeare in this volume.

is usually doing on a lower plane—writing transparently, so that our attention is directed to the object and not to the medium. Such a result is not simply attained by absence of decoration—for even the absence of decoration may err in calling attention to itself—but by never using decoration for its own sake,<sup>1</sup> though, again, the apparently superfluous may be what is really important. Now one of the problems which arise concerning Kipling is related to that skill of craftsmanship which seems to enable him to pass from form to form, though always in an identifiable idiom, and from subject to subject, so that we are aware of no inner compulsion to write about this rather than that—a versatility which may make us suspect him of being no more than a performer. We look, in a poet as well as in a novelist, for what Henry James called the Figure in the Carpet. With the greatest of modern poets this Figure is perfectly manifest (for we can be sure of the existence of the Figure without perfectly understanding it): I mention Yeats at this point because of the contrast between his development, which is very apparent in the way he writes, and Kipling's development, which is only apparent in what he writes about. We expect to feel, with a great writer, that he *had* to write about the subject he took, and in that way. With no writer of equal eminence to Kipling is this inner compulsion, this unity in variety more difficult to discern.

I pass from the earlier ballads to mention a second category of Kipling's verse: those poems which arise out of, or comment upon topical events. Some of these, such as *The Truce of the Bear*, in the form of an apologue, do not aim very high. But to be able to write good verse to occasion is a very rare gift indeed: Kipling had the gift, and he took the obligation to employ it very seriously. Of this type of poem I should put *Gehazi*—a poem inspired

<sup>1</sup> The great speech of Enobarbus in *Antony and Cleopatra* is highly decorated, but the decoration has a purpose beyond its own beauty.



by the Marconi scandals—very high, as a passionate invective rising to real eloquence (and a poem which illustrates, incidentally, the important influence of Biblical imagery and the Authorised Version language upon his writing). The poems on Canada and Australia, and the exequy on King Edward VII, are excellent in their kind, though not very memorable individually. And the gift for occasional verse is allied to the gift for two other kinds of verse in which Kipling excelled: the epigram and the hymn. Good epigrams in English are very few; and the great hymn writer is very rare. Both are extremely objective types of verse: they can and should be charged with intense feeling, but it must be a feeling that can be completely shared. They are possible to a writer so impersonal as Kipling: and I should like the reader to look attentively at the *Epitaphs of the War*. I call Kipling a great hymn writer on the strength of *Recessional*. It is a poem almost too well known to need to have the reader's attention called to it, except to point out that it is one of the poems in which something breaks through from a deeper level than that of the mind of the conscious observer of political and social affairs—something which has the true prophetic inspiration. Kipling might have been one of the most notable of hymn writers. The same gift of prophecy appears, on the political plane, in other poems, such as *The Storm Cone*, but nowhere with greater authority than in *Recessional*.

It is impossible, however, to fit all of Kipling's poems into one or another of several distinct classes. There is the poem *Gethsemane*, which I do not think I understand, and which is the more mysterious because of the author's having chosen to place it so early in his collected edition, since it bears the sub-heading '1914-1918'. And there are the poems of the later period.

The verse of the later period shows an even greater diversity than the early poems. The word 'experimentation' may be applied, and honourably applied, to the

work of many poets who develop and change in maturity. As a man grows older, he may turn to new subject-matter, or he may treat the same material in a different way; as we age we both live in a different world, and become different men in the same world. The changes may be expressed by a change of rhythm, of imagery, of form: the true experimenter is not impelled by restless curiosity, or by desire for novelty, or the wish to surprise and astonish, but by the compulsion to find, in every new poem as in his earliest, the right form for feelings over the development of which he has, as a poet, no control. But just as, with Kipling, the term 'development' does not seem quite right, so neither does the term 'experimentation'. There is great variety, and there are some very remarkable innovations indeed, as in *The Way Through The Woods* and in *The Harp Song of the Dane Women*—

What is a woman that you forsake her,  
And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,  
To go with the old grey Widow-maker?

and in the very fine *Runes on Weland's Sword*. But there were equally original inventions earlier (*Danny Deever*); and there are too, among the later poems, some very fine ones cast in more conventional form, such as *Cold Iron*, *The Land*, *The Children's Song*.

I confess therefore that the critical tools which we are accustomed to use in analysing and criticising poetry do not seem to work; I confess furthermore that introspection into my own processes affords no assistance—part of the fascination of this subject is in the exploration of a mind so different from one's own. I am accustomed to the search for form: but Kipling never seems to be searching for form, but only for a particular form for each poem. So we find in the poems an extraordinary variety, but no evident pattern—the connection is to be established on

some other level. Yet this is no display of empty virtuosity, and we can be sure that there is no ambition of either popular or esoteric success for its own sake. The writer is not only serious, he has a vocation. He is completely ambidexterous, that is to say completely able to express himself in verse or prose: but his necessity for often expressing the same thing in a story and in a poem is a much deeper necessity than that merely to exhibit skill. I know of no writer of such great gifts for whom poetry seems to have been more purely an instrument. Most of us are interested in the form for its own sake—not apart from the content, but because we aim at making something which shall first of all *be*, something which in consequence will have the capability of exciting, within a limited range, a considerable variety of responses from different readers. For Kipling the poem is something which is intended to *act*—and for the most part his poems are intended to elicit the same response from all readers, and only the response which they can make in common. For other poets—at least, for some other poets—the poem may begin to shape itself in fragments of musical rhythm, and its structure will first appear in terms of something analogous to musical form; and such poets find it expedient to occupy their conscious mind with the craftsman's problems, leaving the deeper meaning to emerge, if there, from a lower level. It is a question then of what one chooses to be conscious of, and of how much of the meaning, in a poem, is conveyed direct to the intelligence and how much is conveyed indirectly by the musical impression upon the sensibility—always remembering that the use of the word 'musical' and of musical analogies, in discussing poetry, has its dangers if we do not constantly check its limitations: for the music of verse is inseparable from the meanings and associations of words. If I say then, that this musical concern is secondary and infrequent with Kipling, I am not implying any in-



feriority of craftsmanship, but rather a different order of values from that which we expect to determine the structure of poetry.

If we belong to the kind of critic who is accustomed to consider poems solely by the standards of the 'work of art' we may tend to dismiss Kipling's verse by standards which are not meant to apply. If, on the other hand, we are the biographical critic, interested primarily in the work as a revelation of the man, Kipling is the most elusive of subjects: no writer has been more reticent about himself, or given fewer openings for curiosity, for personal adoration or dislike.

The purely hypothetical reader who came upon this essay with no previous acquaintance with Kipling's verse, might perhaps imagine that I had been briefed in the cause of some hopelessly second-rate writer, and that I was trying, as an exhibition of my ingenuity as an advocate, to secure some small remission of the penalty of oblivion. One might expect that a poet who appeared to communicate so little of his private ecstasies and despairs would be dull; one might expect that a poet who had given so much of his time to the service of the political imagination would be ephemeral; one might expect that a poet so constantly occupied with the appearances of things would be shallow. We know that he is not dull, because we have all, at one time or another, by one poem or another, been thrilled; we know that he is not ephemeral, because we remember so much of what we have read. As for shallowness, that is a charge which can only be brought by those who have continued to read him only with a boyish interest. At times Kipling is not merely possessed of penetration, but almost 'possessed' of a kind of second sight. It is a trifling curiosity in itself that he was reproved for having placed in defence of the Wall a Roman Legion which historians declared had never been near it, and that later discoveries proved to have indeed been stationed

there: that is the sort of thing one comes to expect of Kipling. There are deeper and darker caverns which he penetrated, whether through experience or through imagination does not matter: there are hints in *The End of the Passage*, and later in *The Woman in His Life* and *In the Same Boat*: oddly enough, these stories are foreshadowed by an early poem which I have not included, *La Nuit Blanche*, which introduces one image which reappears in *The End of the Passage*. Kipling knew something of the things which are underneath, and of the things which are beyond the frontier.<sup>1</sup>

I have not explained Kipling's verse or the permanent hold that it can have upon you. It will be enough if I can help to keep him out of the wrong pigeon-holes.<sup>2</sup> If the reader of this book denies that Kipling is a great writer of verse, I hope at least that he will have found new reasons for his judgement, for the ordinary charges brought against him are either untrue or irrelevant. I have been using the term 'verse' with his own authority, for that is what he called it himself. There is poetry in it; but when he writes verse that is not poetry it is not because he has tried to

<sup>1</sup> Compare the description of the agony in *In the Same Boat* (a story the end of which is truer to the experience than is the end of *The Brushwood Boy*): 'Suppose you were a violin string—vibrating—and someone put his finger on you' with the image of the 'banjo string drawn tight' for the breaking wave in *The Finest Story in the World*. Compare also the story *A Matter of Fact* (of the submarine volcanic eruption which projects the sea-monster to the surface) with the opening passages of *Alice in Wonderland*: both depict external events which have exact nightmare correspondence to some spiritual terror. *A Matter of Fact* is a better story than *In the Same Boat*, for the psychological explanation in the latter story comes as an anti-climax to the experience.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. J. H. Oldham has drawn my attention to the relevance of the chapter on 'Art and Magic' in that very remarkable book, *The Principles of Art*, by Professor R. G. Collingwood. Collingwood takes Kipling as an example of 'the artist as magician', and defines a magical art as 'an art which is representative and therefore evocative of emotion, and evokes of set purpose some emotions rather than others in order to discharge them into the affairs of practical life'. Professor Collingwood's contribution here seems to me extremely valuable; but while Kipling is a very good example of what he calls 'the artist as magician', I do not feel that 'the artist as magician' is a complete description of Kipling as a writer of verse.

write poetry and failed. He had another purpose, and one to which he adhered with integrity. It is expressed in a poem (from *A Diversity of Creatures*) which I have thought would come with more effect at the end of this section of my essay, than in the body of the book:

## THE FABULISTS

1914-1918

When all the world would keep a matter hid,  
Since Truth is seldom friend to any crowd,  
Men write in fable as old Æsop did,  
Jesting at that which none will name aloud.  
And this they needs must do, or it will fall  
Unless they please they are not heard at all.

When desperate Folly daily laboureth  
To work confusion upon all we have,  
When diligent Sloth demandeth Freedom's death,  
And banded Fear commandeth Honour's grave—  
Even in that certain hour before the fall,  
Unless men please they are not heard at all.

Needs must all please, yet some not all for need,  
Needs must all toil, yet some not all for gain,  
But that men taking pleasure may take heed,  
Whom present toil shall snatch from later pain.  
Thus some have toiled, but their reward was small  
Since, though they pleased, they were not heard at all.

*This* was the lock that lay upon our lips,  
This was the yoke that we have undergone,  
Denying us all pleasant fellowships  
As in our time and generation.  
Our pleasures unpursued age past recall,  
And for our pains—we are not heard at all.



What man hears aught except the groaning guns?

What man heeds aught save what each instant brings  
When each man's life all imaged life outruns,

What man shall pleasure in imaginings?

So it has fallen, as it was bound to fall,

We are not, nor we were not, heard at all.

## II

I have expressed the view that the variety of Kipling's verse and its mutations from one period to another, cannot be accounted for, and given a unified pattern, by tracing development as we might with most poets. His development cannot be understood through his verse alone, because he was, as I said at the beginning, an integral prose-and-verse writer; and to understand changes we have to consider the prose and the verse together. Kipling appears first to be a writer of different phases and occupations, who in each phase is completely developed, who is never so committed to the pursuit of one verse form as to be prevented from moving to another. He is so different from other poets that the lazy critic is tempted merely to assert that he is not a poet at all, and leave it at that. The changes in his poetry, while they cannot be explained by any usual scheme of poetic development, can to some extent be explained by changes in his outward circumstances. I say 'to some extent', because Kipling, apparently merely the reflection of the world about him, is the most inscrutable of authors. An immense gift for using words, an amazing curiosity and power of observation with his mind and with all his senses, the mask of the entertainer, and beyond that a queer gift of second sight, of transmitting messages from elsewhere, a gift so disconcerting when we are made aware of it that thenceforth we are never sure when it is *not* present: all this makes Kipling a writer impossible wholly to understand and quite impossible to belittle.

Certainly an exceptional sensitiveness to environment is the first characteristic of Kipling that we notice; so that on one level, we may trace his course by external circumstances. What life would have made of such a man, had his birth, growth, maturity and age all taken place in one set of surroundings, is beyond speculation: as life directed, the result was to give him a peculiar detachment and remoteness from all environment, a universal foreignness which is the reverse side of his strong feeling for India, for the Empire, for England and for Sussex, a remoteness as of an alarmingly intelligent visitor from another planet. He remains somehow alien and aloof from all with which he identifies himself. The reader who can get a little distance—but not deep enough—below the level of Kipling's popularity as a teller of tales and reciter of ballads, and who has a vague feeling of something underneath, is apt to give the wrong explanation of his own discomfort. I have tried to disturb the belief that Kipling is a mere writer of jingles: we must now consider whether these 'jingles' are, in a denigratory sense, 'political'.

To have been born in India and to have spent the first remembered years there, is a circumstance of capital importance for a child of such impressionability. To have spent the years from seventeen to twenty-four earning his living there, is for a very precocious and observant young man an important experience also. The result is, it seems to me, that there are two strata in Kipling's appreciation of India, the stratum of the child and that of the young man. It was the latter who observed the British in India and wrote the rather cocky and acid tales of Delhi and Simla, but it was the former who loved the country and its people. In his Indian tales it is on the whole the Indian characters who have the greater reality, because they are treated with the understanding of love. One is not very loving between seventeen and twenty-four. But it is Purun Bhagat, it is the four great Indian characters in *Kim* who



are real: the Lama, Mahbub Ali, Hurree Chunder Mookerjee, and the wealthy widow from the North. As for the Britons, those with whom he is most sympathetic are those who have suffered or fallen—McIntosh Jellaludin has learned more than Strickland.<sup>1</sup> Kipling is of India in a different way from any other Englishman who has written, and in a different way from that of any particular Indian, who has a race, a creed, a local habitation and, if a Hindu, a caste. He might almost be called the first citizen of India. And his relation to India determines that about him which is the most important thing about a man, his religious attitude. It is an attitude of comprehensive tolerance.<sup>2</sup> He is not an unbeliever—on the contrary, he can accept all faiths: that of the Moslem, that of the Hindu, that of the Buddhist, Parsee or Jain, even (through the historical imagination) that of Mithra: if his understanding of Christianity is less affectionate, that is due to his Anglo-Saxon background—and no doubt he saw enough in India of clergy such as Mr. Bennett in *Kim*.

To explain Kipling's feeling for the Empire, and his later feeling for Sussex, as merely the nostalgia of a man without a country, as the need for support felt by the man who does not belong, would be a mistake which would prevent us from understanding Kipling's peculiar contribution. To explain away his patriotic feeling in this way is only necessary for those who consider that such feeling is not a proper theme for verse. There are perhaps those who will admit to expression in poetry patriotism on the defensive: Shakespeare's Henry V is acceptable, in his otherwise embarrassing grandiloquence, because the French army was a good deal bigger than the English

<sup>1</sup> On the subject of Kipling's ethics, and the types of man which he holds up for respect, see a valuable essay by Mr. Bonamy Dobrée in *The Lamp and the Lute*. My only criticism of this essay is that it does not take full account of Kipling's later work.

<sup>2</sup> Not the tolerance of ignorance or indifference. See *The Mark of the Beast*, which those who do not believe in the existence of the Beast probably consider a beastly story.

force, even though Henry's war could hardly be described as a defensive one. But if there is a prejudice against patriotic verse, there is a still stronger prejudice against imperial patriotism in verse. For too many people, an Empire has become something to apologise for, on the ground that it happened by accident, and with the addition that it is a temporary affair anyway and will eventually be absorbed into some universal world association: and patriotism itself is expected to be inarticulate. But we must accustom ourselves to recognising that for Kipling the Empire was not merely an idea, a good idea or a bad one; it was something the reality of which he felt. And in his expression of his feeling he was certainly not aiming at flattery of national, racial or imperial vanity, or attempting to propagate a political programme: he was aiming to communicate the awareness of something in existence of which he felt that most people were very imperfectly aware. It was an awareness of grandeur, certainly, but it was much more an awareness of responsibility.

There is the question of whether 'political' poetry is admissible; there is the question of the way in which Kipling's political poetry is political; there is the question of what his politics were; and finally, there remains the question of what we are to say of that considerable part of his work which cannot, by any stretch of the term, be called political at all.

It is pertinent to call attention to one other great English writer who put politics into verse—Dryden. The question whether Kipling was a poet is not unrelated to the question whether Dryden was a poet. The author of *Absalom and Achitophel* was satirising a lost cause in retrospect, and he was on the successful side; the author of *The Hind and the Panther* was arguing a case in ecclesiastical politics; and both of these purposes were very different from that which Kipling set himself. Both of Dryden's poems are

more political in their appeal to the reason than any of Kipling's. But the two men had much in common. Both were masters of phrase, both employed rather simple rhythms with adroit variations; and by both the medium was employed to convey a simple forceful statement, rather than a musical pattern of emotional overtones. And (if it is possible to use these terms without confusion) they were both classical rather than romantic poets. They arrive at poetry through eloquence; for both, wisdom has the primacy over inspiration; and both are more concerned with the world about them than with their own joys and sorrows, and concerned with their own feelings in their likeness to those of other men rather than in their particularity. But I should not wish to press this likeness too far, or ignore the great differences: and if Kipling suffers in some respects by the comparison, it must be remembered that he has other qualities which do not enter into it at all.

Kipling certainly thought of verse as well as prose as a medium for a public purpose; if we are to pass judgement upon his purpose, we must try to set ourselves in the historical situations in which his various work was written; and whether our prejudice be favourable or antagonistic, we must not look at his observations of one historical situation from the point of view of a later period. Also, we must consider his work as a whole, and the earlier years in the light of the later, and not exaggerate the importance of particular pieces or phrases which we may not like. Even these may be misinterpreted. Mr. Edward Shanks, who has written the best book on Kipling that I have read (and whose chapter on 'The Prophet of Empire' resumes Kipling's political views admirably) says of the poem called *Loot* (a soldier ballad describing the ways of extorting hidden treasure from natives): 'this is wholly detestable, and it makes the commentator on Kipling turn red when he endeavours to explain it'. This is to read an attitude into the poem which I had never suspected. I do not



believe that in this poem he was commending the rapacity and greed of such irregularities, or condoning rapine. If we think this, we must also presume that *The Ladies* was written to glorify miscellaneous miscegenation on the part of professional soldiers quartered in foreign lands. Kipling, at the period to which these poems belong, undoubtedly felt that the professional ranker and his officers too were unappreciated by their peaceful countrymen at home, and that in the treatment of the soldier and the discharged soldier there was often less than social justice: but his concern was to make the soldier known, not to idealise him. He was exasperated by sentimentalism as well as by depreciation or neglect—and either attitude is liable to evoke the other.

I have said that in Kipling as a poet there is no development, but mutation; and that for the development we must look to changes in the environment and in the man himself. The first period is that of India; the second that of travel and of residence in America; the third is that of his settlement in Sussex. These divisions are obvious: what is not so obvious is the development of his view of empire, a view which expands and contracts at the same time. He had always been far from uncritical of the defects and wrongs of the British Empire, but held a firm belief in what it should and might be. In his later phase England, and a particular corner of England, becomes the centre of his vision. He is more concerned with the problem of the soundness of the *core* of empire; this core is something older, more natural and more permanent. But at the same time his vision takes a larger view, and he sees the Roman Empire and the place of England in it. The vision is almost that of an idea of empire laid up in heaven. And with all his geographical and historical imagination, no-one was farther than he from interest in men in the mass, or the manipulation of men in the mass: his symbol was always a particular individual. The symbol had been, at one time,

such men as Mulvaney or Strickland: it became Parnesius and Hobden. Technical mechanics do not lose their charm for him; wireless and aviation succeed steam, and in one of his most other-worldly stories—*They*—a considerable part is played by an early, and not very reliable, model of a motor-car: but Parnesius and Hobden are more important than the machines. One is the defender of a civilisation (of a civilisation, not of civilisation in the abstract) against barbarism; the other represents the essential contact of the civilisation with the soil.

I have said that there is always something alien about Kipling, as of a visitor from another planet; and to some readers he may still seem alien in his identification of himself with Sussex. There is an element of *tour de force* in all his work, which makes some readers uncomfortable: we are always suspicious of people who are too clever. Kipling is apt to arouse some of the same distrust as another great man who was alien in a very different way, and on a more worldly level—though he too had his vision of empire and his flashes of profound insight. Even those who admire Disraeli most may find themselves more at ease with Gladstone, whether they like the man and his politics or not. But Disraeli's foreignness was a comparatively simple matter. And undoubtedly the difference of early environment to which Kipling's foreignness is due gave him an understanding of the English countryside different from the understanding of a man born and brought up in it, and provoked in him thoughts about it which the natives would do well to heed.

It may well be unfortunate for a man's reputation that he should have great success early in life, with one work or with one type of work: for then his early work is what he is remembered by, and people (critics, sometimes, most of all) do not bother to revise their opinions in accordance with his later work. With Kipling, furthermore, a prejudice against the content may combine with a lack of under-

standing of the form to produce an inconsistent condemnation. On the ground of content, he is called a Tory; and on the ground of style, he is called a journalist. Neither of these terms, to be sure, need be held in anything but honour: but the former has come to acquire popular odium by a vulgar identification with a nastier name: to many people a critical attitude towards 'democracy' has come to imply a friendly attitude towards fascism—which, from a truly Tory point of view, is merely the extreme degradation of democracy. Similarly the term 'journalist', when applied to anyone not on the staff of a newspaper, has come to connote truckling to the popular taste of the moment. Kipling was not even a Tory, in the sense of one giving unquestioning loyalty to a political party: he can be called a Tory in a sense in which only a handful of writers together with a number of mostly inarticulate, obscure and uninfluential people are ever Tories in one generation. And as for being a journalist (in the sense mentioned above) we must keep in mind that the causes he espoused were not popular causes when he voiced them; that he did not aim to idealise either border warfare or the professional soldier; that his reflections on the Boer War are more admonitory than laudatory. It may be proposed that, as he dwelt upon the glory of empire, in so doing he helped to conceal its more seamy side: the commercialism, exploitation and neglect. No attentive reader of Kipling can maintain, however, that he was unaware of the faults of British rule: it is simply that he believed the British Empire to be a good thing, that he wished to set before his readers an ideal of what it should be, but was acutely aware of the difficulty of even approximating to this ideal, and of the perpetual danger of falling away even from such standard as might be attained. I cannot find any justification for the charge that he held a doctrine of race superiority. He believed that the British have a greater aptitude for ruling than other people, and that they include a greater number



of kindly, incorruptible and unselfseeking men capable of administration; and he knew that scepticism in this matter is less likely to lead to greater magnanimity than it is to lead to a relaxation of the sense of responsibility. But he cannot be accused of holding that any Briton, simply because of his British race, is necessarily in any way the superior or even the equal of an individual of another race. The types of men which he admires are unlimited by any prejudice; his maturest work on India, and his greatest book, is *Kim*.

The notion of Kipling as a popular entertainer is due to the fact that his works have been popular and that they entertain. However, it is permitted to express popular views of the moment in an unpopular style: it is not approved when a man holds unpopular views and expresses them in something very readable. I do not wish to argue longer over Kipling's early 'imperialism', because there is need to speak of the development of his views. It should be said at this point, before passing on, that Kipling is not a doctrinaire or a man with a programme. His opinions are not to be considered as the antithesis of those of Mr. H. G. Wells. Mr. Wells's imagination is one thing and his political opinions another: the latter change but do not mature. But Kipling did not, in the sense in which that activity can be ascribed to Mr. Wells, think: his aim, and his gift, is to make people see—for the first condition of right thought is right sensation—the first condition of understanding a foreign country is to smell it, as you smell India in *Kim*. If you have seen and felt truly, then if God has given you the power you may be able to think rightly.

The simplest summary of the change in Kipling, in his middle years, is 'the development of the imperial imagination into the historical imagination'. To this development his settling in Sussex must have contributed to no small degree: for he had both the humility to subdue himself to

his surroundings, and the freshness of the vision of stranger. My references here will be to stories rather than to poems: that is because the later unit is a poem and a story together—or a story and two poems—combining to make a form which no-one has used in the same way and in which no-one is ever likely to excel him. When I speak of ‘historical imagination’ I do not assume that there is only one kind. Two different kinds are exemplified by Victor Hugo and Stendhal in their accounts of the battle of Waterloo. For the first it is the charge of the Old Guard, and the sunken road of Ohain; for the latter it is Fabrice’s sudden awareness that the little pattering noise around him is caused by bullets. The historian of one kind is he who gives life to abstractions; the historian of another kind may imply a whole civilisation in the behaviour of a single individual. Mr. Wells can give an epic grandeur to the accumulation of an American fortune; Mr. Lytton Strachey (to name a lesser figure) gave reality to the great by dilating upon their foibles. Kipling’s imagination dwells on the particular experience of the particular man, just as his India was realised in particular men. In *The Finest Story in the World* there appears the same passion for the exact detail that is given scope in his studies of machinery. The Greek galley is described from the point of view of the galley slave. The ship was ‘the kind rowed with oars, and the sea spurts through the oar-holes, and the men row sitting up to their knees in water. Then there’s a bench running down between the two lines of oars, and an overseer with a whip walks up and down the bench to make the men work. . . . There’s a rope running overhead, looped to the upper deck, for the overseer to catch hold of when the ship rolls. When the overseer misses the rope once and falls among the rowers, remember the hero laughs at him and gets licked for it. He’s chained to his oar, of course—the hero . . . with an iron band round his waist fixed to the bench he sits on, and a sort of



handcuff on his left wrist chaining him to the oar. He's on the lower deck where the worst men are sent, and the only light comes from the hatchways and through the oar-holes. Can't you imagine the sunlight just squeezing through between the handle and the hole and wobbling about as the ship moves?'

The historical imagination may give us an awful awareness of the extent of time, or it may give us a dizzy sense of the nearness of the past. It may do both. Kipling, especially in *Puck of Pook's Hill* and *Rewards and Fairies*, aims I think to give at once a sense of the antiquity of England, of the number of generations and peoples who have laboured the soil and in turn been buried beneath it, and of the contemporaneity of the past. Having previously exhibited an imaginative grasp of space, and England in it, he now proceeds to a similar achievement in time. The tales of English history need to be considered in relation to the later stories of contemporary Sussex, such as *An Habitation Enforced*, *My Son's Wife*, and *The Wish House*, together with *They* in one aspect of this curious story. Kipling's awareness and love of Sussex is a very different affair from the feeling of any other 'regional' writer of comparable fame, such as Thomas Hardy. It is not merely that he was highly conscious of what ought to be preserved, where Hardy is the chronicler of decay: or that he wrote of the Sussex which he found, where Hardy wrote of the Dorset that was already passing in his boyhood. It is, first, that the conscience of the 'fabulist' and the consciousness of the political and historical imagination are always at work. To think of Kipling as a writer who could turn his hand to any subject, who wrote of Sussex because he had exhausted his foreign and imperial material, or had satiated the public demand for it, or merely because he was a chameleon who took his colour from environment, would be to miss the mark completely: this later work is the continuation and consummation of the earlier. The

second peculiarity of Kipling's Sussex stories I have already touched upon, the fact that he brings to his work the freshness of a mind and a sensibility developed and matured in quite different environment: he is discovering and reclaiming a lost inheritance. The American Chapins, in *A Habitation Enforced*, have a passive role: the protagonist in the story is the house and the life that it implies, with the profound implication that the countryman belongs to the land, the landlord to his tenants, the farmer to his labourers and not the other way about. This is a deliberate reversal of the values of industrial society. The Chapins, indeed (except for the point of their coming from a country of industrialised mentality) are a kind of mask for Kipling himself. He is also behind the hero of a less successful story in the same group, *My Son's Wife*. (I call this story less successful because he seems to point his moral a little too directly, and because the contrast between the garrulous society of London—or suburban—intellectuals and the speechless solicitor's daughter who likes hunting is hammered with too great insistence. The contrast between a bucolic world in which the second rate still participates in the good, and an intellectual world in which the second rate is usually sham and always tiresome, is not quite fair. The animus which he displays against the latter suggests that he did not have his eye on the object: for we can judge only what we understand, and must constantly dine with the opposition.) What is most important in these stories, and in *The Wish House*, and in *Friendly Brook*, is Kipling's vision of the people of the soil. It is not a Christian vision, but it is at least a pagan vision—a contradiction of the materialistic view: it is the insight into a harmony with nature which must be re-established if the truly Christian imagination is to be recovered by Christians. What he is trying to convey is, again, not a programme of agrarian reform, but a point of view unintelligible to the industrialised mind. Hence the artistic value of the *obviously*

incredible element of the supernatural in *The Wish House* which is exquisitely combined with the sordid realism of the women of the dialogue, the country bus, the suburban villa, and the cancer of the poor.

This hard and obscure story has to be studied in relation to the two hard and obscure poems (not here included) which precede and follow it, and which would be still more hard and obscure without the story. We have gone a long way, at this stage, from the mere story teller: a long way even from the man who felt it his duty to try to make certain things plain to his countrymen who would not see them. He could hardly have thought that many people in his own time or at any time would take the trouble to understand the parables, or even to appreciate the precision of observation, the calculating pains in selecting and combining elements, the choice of word and phrase, that were spent in their elaboration. He must have known that his own fame would get in the way, his reputation as a story teller, his reputation as a 'Tory journalist', his reputation as a facile writer who could dash off something about what happened yesterday, his reputation even as a writer of books for children which children liked to read and hear.

I return to the beginning. The late poems like the late stories with which they belong, are sometimes more obscure, because they are trying to express something more difficult than the early poems. They are the poems of a wiser and more mature writer. But they do not show any movement from 'verse' to 'poetry': they are just as instrumental as the early work, but now instruments for a matured purpose. Kipling could handle, from the beginning to the end, a considerable variety of metres and stanza forms with perfect competence; he introduces remarkable variations of his own; but as a poet he does not revolutionize. He is not one of those writers of whom one can say, that the



*form* of English poetry will always be different from what it would have been if they had not written. What fundamentally differentiates his 'verse' from 'poetry' is the subordination of musical interest. Many of the poems give, indeed, judged by the ear, an impression of the mood, some are distinctly onomatopoeic: but there is a harmonics of poetry which is not merely beyond their range—it would interfere with the intention. It is possible to argue exceptions; but I am speaking of his work as a whole, and I maintain that without understanding the purpose which animates his verse as a whole, one is not prepared to understand the exceptions.

I make no apology for having used the terms 'verse' and 'poetry' in a loose way: so that while I speak of Kipling's work as verse and not as poetry, I am still able to speak of individual compositions as poems, and also to maintain that there is 'poetry' in the 'verse'. Where terminology is loose, where we have not the vocabulary for distinctions which we feel, our only precision is found in being aware of the imperfection of our tools, and of the different senses in which we are using the same words. It should be clear that when I contrast 'verse' with 'poetry' I am not, *in this context*, implying a value judgement. I do not mean, here, by verse, the work of a man who would write poetry if he could: I mean by it something which does what 'poetry' could not do. The difference which would turn Kipling's verse into poetry, does not represent a failure or deficiency: he knew perfectly well what he was doing; and from his point of view more 'poetry' would interfere with his purpose. And I make the claim, that in speaking of Kipling we are entitled to say '*great* verse'. What other famous poets should be put into the category of great verse writers is a question which I do not here attempt to answer. That question is complicated by the fact that we should be dealing with matters as imprecise as the shape and size of a cloud or the beginning and end of

a wave. But the writer whose work is *always* clearly verse, is not a great verse writer: if a writer is to be that, there must be some of his work of which we cannot say whether it is verse or poetry. And the poet who could not write 'verse' when verse was needed, would be without that sense of structure which is required to make a poem of any length readable. I would suggest also that we too easily assume that what is most valuable is also most rare, and vice versa. I can think of a number of poets who have written great poetry, only of a very few whom I should call great verse writers. And unless I am mistaken, Kipling's position in this class is not only high, but unique.

Such reflections could be pursued indefinitely: but this essay is intended as an introduction: if it assists the reader to approach Kipling's verse with a fresh mind, and to regard it in a new light, and to read it as if for the first time, it will have served its purpose.

T. S. ELIOT

*26th September 1941.*

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A Choice of  
**KIPLING'S VERSE**  
made by T. S. Eliot





## L'ENVOI

*(Departmental Ditties)*

The smoke upon your Altar dies,  
The flowers decay,  
The Goddess of your sacrifice  
Has flown away.  
What profit then to sing or slay  
The sacrifice from day to day?

‘ We know the Shrine is void,’ they said,  
‘ The Goddess flown—  
‘ Yet wreaths are on the altar laid—  
‘ The Altar-Stone  
‘ Is black with fumes of sacrifice,  
‘ Albeit She has fled our eyes.

‘ For, it may be, if still we sing  
‘ And tend the Shrine,  
‘ Some Deity on wandering wing  
‘ May there incline;  
‘ And, finding all in order meet,  
‘ Stay while we worship at Her feet.’

## DEDICATION FROM 'BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS'

**B**eyond the path of the outmost sun through utter  
darkness hurled—

Farther than ever comet flared or vagrant star-dust  
swirled—

Live such as fought and sailed and ruled and loved and  
made our world.

They are purged of pride because they died; they know  
the worth of their bays;

They sit at wine with the Maidens Nine and the Gods of  
the Elder Days—

It is their will to serve or be still as fitteth Our Father's  
praise.

'Tis theirs to sweep through the ringing deep where  
Azrael's outposts are,

Or buffet a path through the Pit's red wrath when God  
goes out to war,

Or hang with the reckless Seraphim on the rein of a red-  
maned star.

They take their mirth in the joy of the Earth—they dare  
not grieve for her pain.

They know of toil and the end of toil; they know God's  
Law is plain;

So they whistle the Devil to make them sport who know  
that Sin is vain.

And oft-times cometh our wise Lord God, master of every  
trade,

And tells them tales of His daily toil, of Edens newly  
made;

And they rise to their feet as He passes by, gentlemen  
unafraid.

To these who are cleansed of base Desire, Sorrow and  
Lust and Shame—  
Gods for they knew the hearts of men, men for they  
stooped to Fame—  
Borne on the breath that men call Death, my brother's  
spirit came.

He scarce had need to doff his pride or slough the dross  
of Earth—  
E'en as he trod that day to God so walked he from his  
birth,  
In simpleness and gentleness and honour and clean mirth.  
So cup to lip in fellowship they gave him welcome high  
And made him place at the banquet board—the Strong  
Men ranged thereby,  
Who had done his work and held his peace and had no  
fear to die.

Beyond the loom of the last lone star, through open dark-  
ness hurled,  
Further than rebel comet dared or hiving star-swarm  
swirled,  
Sits he with those that praise our God for that they served  
His world.

## SESTINA OF THE TRAMP-ROYAL

1896

Speakin' in general, I 'ave tried 'em all—  
The 'appy roads that take you o'er the world.  
Speakin' in general, I 'ave found them good  
For such as cannot use one bed too long,  
But must get 'ence, the same as I 'ave done,  
An' go observin' matters till they die.



What do it matter where or 'ow we die,  
So long as we've our 'ealth to watch it all—  
The different ways that different things are done,  
An' men an' women lovin' in this world;  
Takin' our chances as they come along,  
An' when they ain't, pretendin' they are good?

In cash or credit—no, it aren't no good;  
You 'ave to 'ave the 'abit or you'd die,  
Unless you lived your life but one day long,  
Nor didn't prophesy nor fret at all,  
But drew your tucker some'ow from the world,  
An' never bothered what you might ha' done.

But, Gawd, what things are they I 'aven't done?  
I've turned my 'and to most, an' turned it good,  
In various situations round the world—  
For 'im that doth not work must surely die;  
But that's no reason man should labour all  
'Is life on one same shift—life's none so long.

Therefore, from job to job I've moved along.  
Pay couldn't 'old me when my time was done,  
For something in my 'ead upset it all,  
Till I 'ad dropped whatever 'twas for good,  
An', out at sea, be'eld the dock-lights die,  
An' met my mate—the wind that tramps the world!

It's like a book, I think, this bloomin' world,  
Which you can read and care for just so long,  
But presently you feel that you will die  
Unless you get the page you're readin' done,  
An' turn another—likely not so good;  
But what you're after is to turn 'em all.

Gawd bless this world! Whatever she 'ath done—  
Excep' when awful long—I've found it good.  
So write, before I die, 'E liked it all!'

## THE GREEK NATIONAL ANTHEM

1918

We knew thee of old,  
Oh, divinely restored,  
By the light of thine eyes  
And the light of thy Sword.

From the graves of our slain  
Shall thy valour prevail  
As we greet thee again—  
Hail, Liberty! Hail!

Long time didst thou dwell  
Mid the peoples that mourn,  
Awaiting some voice  
That should bid thee return.

Ah, slow broke that day  
And no man dared call,  
For the shadow of tyranny  
Lay over all:

And we saw thee sad-eyed,  
The tears on thy cheeks  
While thy raiment was dyed  
In the blood of the Greeks.

Yet, behold now thy sons  
With impetuous breath  
Go forth to the fight  
Seeking Freedom or Death.

From the graves of our slain  
Shall thy valour prevail  
As we greet thee again—  
Hail, Liberty! Hail!

## THE BROKEN MEN

1902

For things we never mention,  
For Art misunderstood—  
For excellent intention  
That did not turn to good;  
From ancient tales' renewing,  
From clouds we would not clear—  
Beyond the Law's pursuing  
We fled, and settled here.

We took no tearful leaving,  
We bade no long good-byes.  
Men talked of crime and thieving,  
Men wrote of fraud and lies.  
To save our injured feelings  
'Twas time and time to go—  
Behind was dock and Dartmoor,  
Ahead lay Callao!

The widow and the orphan  
That pray for ten per cent,



They clapped their trailers on us  
To spy the road we went.  
They watched the foreign sailings  
(They scan the shipping still),  
And that's your Christian people  
Returning good for ill!

God bless the thoughtful islands  
Where never warrants come;  
God bless the just Republics  
That give a man a home,  
That ask no foolish questions,  
But set him on his feet;  
And save his wife and daughters  
From the workhouse and the street.

On church and square and market  
The noonday silence falls;  
You'll hear the drowsy mutter  
Of the fountain in our halls.  
Asleep amid the yuccas  
The city takes her ease—  
Till twilight brings the land-wind  
To the clicking jalousies.

Day long the diamond weather,  
The high, unaltered blue—  
The smell of goats and incense  
And the mule-bells tinkling through.  
Day long the warder ocean  
That keeps us from our kin,  
And once a month our levée  
When the English mail comes in.

You'll find us up and waiting  
To treat you at the bar;

You'll find us less exclusive  
Than the average English are.  
We'll meet you with a carriage,  
Too glad to show you round,  
But—we do not lunch on steamers,  
For they are English ground.

We sail o' nights to England  
And join our smiling Boards—  
Our wives go in with Viscounts  
And our daughters dance with Lords,  
But behind our princely doings,  
And behind each coup we make,  
We feel there's Something Waiting,  
And—we meet It when we wake.

Ah, God! One sniff of England—  
To greet our flesh and blood—  
To hear the traffic slurring  
Once more through London mud!  
Our towns of wasted honour—  
Our streets of lost delight!  
How stands the old Lord Warden?  
Are Dover's cliffs still white?

## GETHSEMANE

1914-18

The Garden called Gethsemane  
In Picardy it was,  
And there the people came to see  
The English soldiers pass.  
We used to pass—we used to pass  
Or halt, as it might be.

And ship our masks in case of gas  
Beyond Gethsemane.

The Garden called Gethsemane,  
It held a pretty lass,  
But all the time she talked to me  
I prayed my cup might pass.  
The officer sat on the chair,  
The men lay on the grass,  
And all the time we halted there  
I prayed my cup might pass.

It didn't pass—it didn't pass—  
It didn't pass from me.  
I drank it when we met the gas  
Beyond Gethsemane!

## THE SONG OF THE BANJO

1894

You couldn't pack a Broadwood half a mile—  
You mustn't leave a fiddle in the damp—  
You couldn't raft an organ up the Nile,  
And play it in an Equatorial swamp.  
I travel with the cooking-pots and pails—  
I'm sandwiched 'tween the coffee and the pork—  
And when the dusty column checks and tails,  
You should hear me spur the rearguard to a walk!

With my '*Pilly-willy-winky-winky-popp!*'  
[Oh, it's any tune that comes into my head!]  
So I keep 'em moving forward till they drop;  
So I play 'em up to water and to bed.

In the silence of the camp before the fight,  
When it's good to make your will and say your prayer,  
You can hear my *strumpty-tumpty* overnight,  
Explaining ten to one was always fair.  
I'm the Prophet of the Utterly Absurd,  
Of the Patently Impossible and Vain—  
And when the Thing that Couldn't has occurred,  
Give me time to change my leg and go again.

With my '*Tumpa-tumpa-tumpa-tumpa-tump!*'  
In the desert where the dung-fed camp-smoke  
curled.  
There was never voice before us till I led our lonely  
chorus,  
I—the war-drum of the White Man round the  
world!

By the bitter road the Younger Son must tread,  
Ere he win to hearth and saddle of his own,—  
'Mid the riot of the shearers at the shed,  
In the silence of the herder's hut alone—  
In the twilight, on a bucket upside down,  
Hear me babble what the weakest won't confess—  
I am Memory and Torment—I am Town!  
I am all that ever went with evening dress!

With my '*Tunka-tunka-tunka-tunka-tunk!*'  
[So the lights—the London Lights—grow near and  
plain!]  
So I rowel 'em afresh towards the Devil and the Flesh  
Till I bring my broken rankers home again.

In desire of many marvels over sea,  
Where the new-raised tropic city sweats and roars,  
I have sailed with Young Ulysses from the quay  
Till the anchor rumbled down on stranger shores.



He is blooded to the open and the sky,  
He is taken in a snare that shall not fail,  
He shall hear me singing strongly, till he die,  
Like the shouting of a backstay in a gale.

With my '*Hya! Heeya! Heeya! Hullah! Haul!*'

[Oh, the green that thunders aft along the deck!]  
Are you sick o' towns and men? You must sign and  
sail again,

For it's 'Johnny Bowlegs, pack your kit and  
trek!'

Through the gorge that gives the stars at noon-day clear—  
Up the pass that packs the scud beneath our wheel—  
Round the bluff that sinks her thousand fathom sheer—  
Down the valley with our guttering brakes asqueal:  
Where the trestle groans and quivers in the snow,  
Where the many-shedded levels loop and twine,  
Hear me lead my reckless children from below  
Till we sing the Song of Roland to the pine!

With my '*Tinka-tinka-tinka-tinka-tink!*'

[Oh, the axe has cleared the mountain, croup and  
crest!]

And we ride the iron stallions down to drink,  
Through the cañons to the waters of the West!

And the tunes that mean so much to you alone—  
Common tunes that make you choke and blow your  
nose—

Vulgar tunes that bring the laugh that brings the groan—  
I can rip your very heartstrings out with those;  
With the feasting, and the folly, and the fun—  
And the lying, and the lusting, and the drink,  
And the merry play that drops you, when you're done.  
To the thoughts that burn like irons if you think.

With my '*Plunka-lunka-lunka-lunka-lunk!*'  
Here's a trifle on account of pleasure past,  
Ere the wit that made you win gives you eyes to see  
your sin  
And—the heavier repentance at the last!

Let the organ moan her sorrow to the roof—  
I have told the naked stars the Grief of Man!  
Let the trumpet snare the foeman to the proof—  
I have known Defeat, and mocked it as we ran!  
My bray ye may not alter nor mistake  
When I stand to jeer the fatted Soul of Things,  
But the Song of Lost Endeavour that I make,  
Is it hidden in the twanging of the strings?

With my '*Ta-ra-rara-rara-ra-ra-rrrp!*'  
[Is it naught to you that hear and pass me by?]  
But the word—the word is mine, when the order  
moves the line  
And the lean, locked ranks go roaring down to die!

The grandam of my grandam was the Lyre—  
[Oh, the blue below the little fisher-huts!]  
That the Stealer stooping beachward filled with fire,  
Till she bore my iron head and ringing guts!  
By the wisdom of the centuries I speak—  
To the tune of yestermorn I set the truth—  
I, the joy of life unquestioned—I, the Greek—  
I, the everlasting Wonder-song of Youth!

With my '*Tinka-tinka-tinka-tinka-tink!*'  
[What d'ye lack, my noble masters! What d'ye  
lack?]  
So I draw the world together link by link :  
Yea, from Delos up to Limerick and back!

## THE PRO-CONSULS

(LORD MILNER)

*The overfaithful sword returns the user  
His heart's desire at price of his heart's blood.  
The clamour of the arrogant accuser  
Wastes that one hour we needed to make good.  
This was foretold of old at our outgoing;  
This we accepted who have squandered, knowing,  
The strength and glory of our reputations,  
At the day's need, as it were dross, to guard  
The tender and new-dedicate foundations  
Against the sea we fear—not man's award.*

They that dig foundations deep,  
Fit for realms to rise upon,  
Little honour do they reap  
Of their generation,  
Any more than mountains gain  
Stature till we reach the plain.

With no veil before their face  
Such as shroud or sceptre lend—  
Daily in the market-place,  
Of one height to foe and friend—  
They must cheapen self to find  
Ends uncheapened for mankind.

Through the night when hirelings rest,  
Sleepless they arise, alone,  
The unsleeping arch to test  
And the o'er-trusted corner-stone,  
'Gainst the need, they know, that lies  
Hid behind the centuries.

Not by lust of praise or show,  
Not by Peace herself betrayed—  
Peace herself must they forgo  
Till that peace be fitly made;  
And in single strength uphold  
Wearier hands and hearts acold.

On the stage their act hath framed  
For thy sports, O Liberty!  
Doubted are they, and defamed  
By the tongues their act set free,  
While they quicken, tend and raise  
Power that must their power displace.

Lesser men feign greater goals,  
Failing whereof they may sit  
Scholarly to judge the souls  
That go down into the Pit  
And, despite its certain clay,  
Heave a new world toward the day.

*These* at labour make no sign,  
More than planets, tides or years  
Which discover God's design,  
Not our hopes and not our fears;  
Nor in aught they gain or lose  
Seek a triumph or excuse!

*For, so the Ark be borne to Zion, who  
Heeds how they perished or were paid that bore it?  
For, so the Shrine abide, what shame—what pride—  
If we, the priests, were bound or crowned before it?*



## MCANDREW'S HYMN

1893

Lord, Thou hast made this world below the shadow of  
a dream,

An', taught by time, I tak' it so—exceptin' always Steam.  
From coupler-flange to spindle-guide I see Thy Hand, O  
God—

Predestination in the stride o' yon connectin'-rod.

John Calvin might ha' forged the same—enormous, cer-  
tain, slow—

Ay, wrought it in the furnace-flame—*my* 'Institutio.'

I cannot get my sleep to-night; old bones are hard to  
please;

I'll stand the middle watch up here—alone wi' God an'  
these

My engines, after ninety days o' race an' rack an' strain  
Through all the seas of all Thy world, slam-bangin' home  
again.

Slam-bang too much—they knock a wee—the crosshead-  
gibs are loose,

But thirty thousand mile o' sea has gied them fair ex-  
cuse. . . .

Fine, clear an' dark—a full-draught breeze, wi' Ushant out  
o' sight,

An' Ferguson relievin' Hay. Old girl, ye'll walk to-night!

His wife's at Plymouth. . . . Seventy—One—Two—

Three since he began—

Three turns for Mistress Ferguson . . . and who's to  
blame the man?

There's none at any port for me, by drivin' fast or slow,  
Since Elsie Campbell went to Thee, Lord, thirty years ago  
(The year the *Sarah Sands* was burned. Oh, roads we used  
to tread,

Fra' Maryhill to Pollokshaws—fra' Govan to Parkhead!)

Not but they're ceevil on the Board. Ye'll hear Sir Kenneth say :

'Good morn, McAndrew! Back again? An' how's your bilge to-day?'

Miscallin' technicalities but handin' me my chair  
To drink Madeira wi' three Earls—the auld Fleet Engineer  
That started as a boiler-whelp—when steam and he were low.

*I* mind the time we used to serve a broken pipe wi' tow!  
Ten pound was all the pressure then—Eh! Eh!—a man wad drive;

An' here, our workin' gauges give one hunder sixty-five!  
We're creepin' on wi' each new rig—less weight an' larger power;

There'll be the loco-boiler next an' thirty mile an hour!  
Thirty an' more. What I ha' seen since ocean-steam began  
Leaves me na doot for the machine: but what about the man?

The man that counts, wi' all his runs, one million mile o' sea:

Four time the span from earth to moon. . . . How far,  
O Lord, from Thee

That wast beside him night an' day? Ye mind my first typhoon?

It scoughed the skipper on his way to jock wi' the saloon.  
Three feet were on the stokehold-floor—just slappin' to an' fro—

An' cast me on a furnace-door. I have the marks to show.

Marks! I ha' marks o' more than burns—deep in my soul an' black,

An' times like this, when things go smooth, my wickudness comes back.

The sins o' four an' forty years, all up an' down the seas,  
Clack an' repeat like valves half-fed. . . . Forgie 's our trespasses!

Nights when I'd come on deck to mark, wi' envy in my  
     gaze,  
 The couples kittlin' in the dark between the funnel-  
     stays;  
 Years when I raked the Ports wi' pride to fill my cup o'  
     wrong—  
 Judge not, O Lord, my steps aside at Gay Street in Hong-  
     Kong!  
 Blot out the wastrel hours of mine in sin when I abode—  
 Jane Harrigan's an' Number Nine, The Reddick an' Grant  
     Road!  
 An' waur than all—my crownin' sin—rank blasphemy an'  
     wild.  
 I was not four and twenty then—Ye wadna judge a  
     child?  
 I'd seen the Tropics first that run—new fruit, new smells,  
     new air—  
 How could I tell—blind-fou wi' sun—the Deil was lurkin'  
     there?  
 By day like playhouse-scenes the shore slid past our sleepy  
     eyes;  
 By night those soft, lasceevious stars leered from those  
     velvet skies,  
 In port (we used no cargo-steam) I'd daunder down the  
     streets—  
 An' ijjit grinnin' in a dream—for shells an' parrakeets,  
 An' walkin'-sticks o' carved bamboo an' blowfish stuffed  
     an' dried—  
 Fillin' my bunk wi' rubbishry the Chief put overside.  
 Till, off Sambawa Head, Ye mind, I heard a land-breeze  
     ca',  
 Milk-warm wi' breath o' spice an' bloom: 'McAndrew,  
     come awa'!'

Firm, clear an' low—no haste, no hate—the ghostly  
     whisper went,  
 Just statin' eevidential facts beyon' all argument:

'Your mither's God's a graspin' deil, the shadow o'  
 yoursel',  
 'Got out o' books by meenisters clean daft on Heaven an'  
 Hell.  
 'They mak' him in the Broomielaw, o' Glasgie cold an'  
 dirt,  
 'A jealous, pridefu' fetich, lad, that's only strong to  
 hurt.  
 'Ye'll not go back to Him again an' kiss His red-hot  
 rod,  
 'But come wi' Us' (Now, who were *They?*) 'an' know  
 the Leevin' God,  
 'That does not kipper souls for sport or break a life in  
 jest,  
 'But swells the ripenin' cocoanuts an' ripes the woman's  
 breast.'  
 An' there it stopped—cut off—no more—that quiet, cer-  
 tain voice—  
 For me, six months o' twenty-four, to leave or take at  
 choice.  
 'Twas on me like a thunderclap—it racked me through an'  
 through—  
 Temptation past the show o' speech, unnameable an'  
 new—  
 The Sin against the Holy Ghost? . . . An' under all,  
 our screw.  
 That storm blew by but left behind her anchor-shiftin'  
 swell.  
 Thou knowest all my heart an' mind, Thou knowest, Lord,  
 I fell—  
 Third on the *Mary Gloster* then, and first that night in  
 Hell!  
 Yet was Thy Hand beneath my head, about my feet Thy  
 Care—  
 Fra' Deli clear to Torres Strait, the trial o' despair,

120567



But when we touched the Barrier Reef Thy answer to my  
prayer! . . .

We dared na run that sea by night but lay an' held  
our fire,

An' I was drowsin' on the hatch—sick—sick wi' doubt an'  
tire:

*'Better the sight of eyes that see than wanderin' o' desire!'*

Ye mind that word? Clear as our gongs—again, an' once  
again,

When rippin' down through coral-trash ran out our  
moorin'-chain:

An', by Thy Grace, I had the Light to see my duty plain.  
Light on the engine-room—no more—bright as our  
carbons burn.

I've lost it since a thousand times, but never past return!

Obsairve! Per annum we'll have here two thousand souls  
aboard—

Think not I dare to justify myself before the Lord,  
But—average fifteen hunder souls safe-borne fra' port to  
port—

I *am* o' service to my kind. Ye wadna blame the thought?  
Maybe they steam from Grace to Wrath—to sin by folly  
led—

It isna mine to judge their path—their lives are on my  
head.

Mine at the last—when all is done it all comes back to me,  
The fault that leaves six thousand ton a log upon the sea.  
We'll tak' one stretch—three weeks an' odd by ony road  
ye steer—

Fra' Cape Town east to Wellington—ye need an engineer.  
Fail there—ye've time to weld your shaft—ay, eat it, ere  
ye're spoke;

Or make Kerguelen under sail—three jiggers burned wi'  
smoke!

An' home again—the Rio run: it's no child's play to go  
Steamin' to bell for fourteen days o' snow an' floe an'  
blow.

The bergs like kelpies overside that girn an' turn an' shift  
Whaur, grindin' like the Mills o' God, goes by the big  
South drift.

(Hail, Snow and Ice that praise the Lord. I've met them  
at their work,

An' wished we had anither route or they anither kirk.)  
Yon's strain, hard strain, o' head an' hand, for though Thy  
Power brings

All skill to naught, Ye'll understand a man must think o'  
things.

Then, at the last, we'll get to port an' hoist their baggage  
clear—

The passengers, wi' gloves an' canes—an' this is what I'll  
hear:

'Well, thank ye for a pleasant voyage. The tender's  
comin' now.'

While I go testin' follower-bolts an' watch the skipper bow.  
They've words for every one but me—shake hands wi'  
half the crew,

Except the dour Scots engineer, the man they never knew.  
An' yet I like the wark for all we've dam'-few pickin's  
here—

No pension, an' the most we'll earn's four hunder pound  
a year.

Better myself abroad? Maybe. *I'd* sooner starve than sail  
Wi' such as call a snifter-rod *ross* . . . French for nightin-  
gale.

Commeesion on my stores? Some do; but I cannot afford  
To lie like stewards wi' patty-pans. I'm older than the  
Board.

A bonus on the coal I save? Ou ay, the Scots are close,  
But when I grudge the strength Ye gave I'll grudge their  
food to *those*.

(There's bricks that I might recommend—an' clink the firebars cruel.

No! Welsh—Wangarti at the worst—an' damn all patent fuel!)

Inventions? Ye must stay in port to mak' a patent pay.  
My Deeferential Valve-Gear taught me how that business lay.

I blame no chaps wi' clearer heads for aught they make or sell.

I found that I could not invent an' look to these as well.  
So, wrestled wi' Apollyon—Nah!—fretted like a bairn—  
But burned the workin'-plans last run, wi' all I hoped to earn.

Ye know how hard an Idol dies, an' what that meant to me—

E'en tak' it for a sacrifice acceptable to Thee. . . .

*Below there! Oiler! What's your wark? Ye find it runnin' hard?*

*Ye needn't swill the cup wi' oil—this isn't the Cunard!*

*Ye thought? Ye are not paid to think. Go, sweat that off again!*

Tck! Tck! It's deeficult to sweer nor tak' The Name in vain!

Men, ay, an' women, call me stern. Wi' these to oversee  
Ye'll note I've little time to burn on social repartee.

The bairns see what their elders miss; they'll hunt me to an' fro,

Till for the sake of—well, a kiss—I tak' 'em down below.  
That minds me of our Viscount loon—Sir Kenneth's kin—the chap

Wi' Russia-leather tennis-shoon an' spar-decked yachtin'-cap.

I showed him round last week, o'er all—an' at the last says he:

'Mister McAndrew, don't you think steam spoils romance at sea?'

Damned ijjit! I'd been doon that morn to see what ailed  
     the throws,  
 Manholin', on my back—the cranks three inches off my  
     nose.  
 Romance! Those first-class passengers they like it very  
     well,  
 Printed an' bound in little books; but why don't poets  
     tell?  
 I'm sick of all their quirks an' turns—the loves an' doves  
     they dream—  
 Lord, send a man like Robbie Burns to sing the Song o'  
     Steam!  
 To match wi' Scotia's noblest speech yon orchestra sub-  
     lime  
 Whaurto—uplifted like the Just—the tail-rods mark the  
     time.  
 The crank-throws give the double-bass, the feed-pump  
     sobs an' heaves,  
 An' now the main eccentrics start their quarrel on the  
     sheaves:  
 Her time, her own appointed time, the rocking link-head  
     bides,  
 Till—hear that note?—the rod's return whings glimmerin'  
     through the guides.  
 They're all awa'! True beat, full power, the clangin'  
     chorus goes  
 Clear to the tunnel where they sit, my purrin' dynamoes.  
 Interdependence absolute, foreseen, ordained, decreed,  
 To work, Ye'll note, at ony tilt an' every rate o'  
     speed.  
 Fra' skylight-lift to furnace-bars, backed, bolted, braced  
     an' stayed,  
 An' singin' like the Mornin' Stars for joy that they are  
     made;  
 While, out o' touch o' vanity, the sweatin' thrust-block  
     says:  
 'Not unto us the praise, or man—not unto us the praise!'



Now, a' together, hear them lift their lesson—theirs an'  
mine:

'Law, Orrder, Duty an' Restraint, Obedience, Discipline!'

Mill, forge an' try-pit taught them that when roarin' they  
arose,

An' whiles I wonder if a soul was gied them wi' the blows.  
Oh for a man to weld it then, in one trip-hammer strain,  
Till even first-class passengers could tell the meanin' plain!  
But no one cares except mysel' that serve an' understand  
My seven thousand horse-power here. Eh, Lord! They're  
grand—they're grand!

Uplift am I? When first in store the new-made beasties  
stood,

Were Ye cast down that breathed the Word declarin' all  
things good?

Not so! O' that warld-liftin' joy no after-fall culd vex,  
Ye've left a glimmer still to cheer the Man—the Arrtifex!  
*That* holds, in spite o' knock and scale, o' friction, waste  
an' slip,

An' by that light—now, mark my word—we'll build the  
Perfect Ship.

I'll never last to judge her lines or take her curve—not I.  
But I ha' lived an' I ha' worked. Be thanks to Thee, Most  
High!

An' I ha' done what I ha' done—judge Thou if ill or  
well—

Always Thy Grace preventin' me. . . .

Losh! Yon's the 'Stand-by' bell.

Pilot so soon? His flare it is. The mornin'-watch is set.  
Well, God be thanked, as I was sayin', I'm no Pelagian yet.  
Now I'll tak' on. . . .

*'Morrn, Ferguson. Man, have ye ever thought  
What your good leddy costs in coal? . . . I'll burn 'em  
down to port.*

## THE 'MARY GLOSTER'

1894

I've paid for your sickest fancies; I've humoured your  
crackedest whim—

Dick, it's your daddy, dying; you've got to listen to  
him!

Good for a fortnight, am I? The doctor told you? He  
lied.

I shall go under by morning, and—— Put that nurse out-  
side.

'Never seen death yet, Dickie? Well, now is your time to  
learn,

And you'll wish you held my record before it comes to  
your turn.

Not counting the Line and the Foundry, the Yards and  
the village, too,

I've made myself and a million; but I'm damned if I made  
you.

Master at two-and-twenty, and married at twenty-  
three—

Ten thousand men on the pay-roll, and forty freighters at  
sea!

Fifty years between 'em, and every year of it fight,  
And now I'm Sir Anthony Gloster, dying, a baronite:  
For I lunched with his Royal 'Ighness—what was it the  
papers had?

'Not least of our merchant-princes.' Dickie, that's me,  
your dad!

*I* didn't begin with askings. *I* took my job and I stuck;  
I took the chances they wouldn't, an' now they're calling  
it luck.

Lord, what boats I've handled—rotten and leaky and old—  
Ran 'em, or—opened the bilge-cock, precisely as I was  
told.

Grub that 'ud bind you crazy, and crews that 'ud turn you  
grey,  
And a big fat lump of insurance to cover the risk on the  
way.  
The others they dursn't do it; they said they valued their  
life  
(They've served me since as skippers). *I* went, and *I* took  
my wife.  
Over the world *I* drove 'em, married at twenty-  
three,  
And your mother saving the money and making a man of  
me.  
*I* was content to be master, but she said there was better  
behind;  
She took the chances *I* wouldn't, and *I* followed your  
mother blind.  
She egged me to borrow the money, an' she helped me to  
clear the loan,  
When we bought half-shares in a cheap 'un and hoisted a  
flag of our own.  
Patching and coaling on credit, and living the Lord knew  
how,  
We started the Red Ox freighters—we've eight-and-thirty  
now.  
And those were the days of clippers, and the freights were  
clipper-freights,  
And we knew we were making our fortune, but she died in  
Macassar Straits—  
By the Little Paternosters, as you come to the Union  
Bank—  
And we dropped her in fourteen fathom: *I* pricked it off  
where she sank.  
Owners we were, full owners, and the boat was christened  
for her,  
And she died in the *Mary Gloster*. My heart, how young  
we were!

So I went on a spree round Java and wellnigh ran her  
ashore,  
But your mother came and warned me and I wouldn't  
liquor no more:  
Strict I stuck to my business, afraid to stop or I'd  
think,  
Saving the money (she warned me), and letting the other  
men drink.  
And I met M'Cullough in London (I'd saved five 'undred  
then),  
And 'tween us we started the Foundry—three forges and  
twenty men.  
Cheap repairs for the cheap 'uns. It paid, and the business  
grew;  
For I bought me a steam-lathe patent, and that was a gold  
mine too.  
'Cheaper to build 'em than buy 'em,' *I* said, but  
M'Cullough he shied,  
And we wasted a year in talking before we moved to the  
Clyde.  
And the Lines were all beginning, and we all of us started  
fair,  
Building our engines like houses and staying the boilers  
square.  
But M'Cullough 'e wanted cabins with marble and maple  
and all,  
And Brussels an' Utrecht velvet, and baths and a Social  
Hall,  
And pipes for closets all over, and cutting the frames too  
light,  
But M'Cullough he died in the Sixties, and—— Well, I'm  
dying to-night. . . .  
I knew—I knew what was coming, when we bid on the  
*Byfleet's* keel—  
They piddled and piffled with iron. I'd given my orders  
for steel!



Steel and the first expansions. It paid, I tell you, it  
paid,  
When we came with our nine-knot freighters and collared  
the long-run trade!  
And they asked me how I did it, and I gave 'em the Scrip-  
ture text,  
'You keep your light so shining a little in front o' the  
next!'  
They copied all they could follow, but they couldn't copy  
my mind,  
And I left 'em sweating and stealing a year and a half  
behind.  
Then came the armour-contracts, but that was M'Cul-  
lough's side;  
He was always best in the Foundry, but better, perhaps,  
he died.  
I went through his private papers; the notes was plainer  
than print;  
And I'm no fool to finish if a man'll give me a  
hint.  
(I remember his widow was angry.) So I saw what his  
drawings meant,  
And I started the six-inch rollers, and it paid me sixty per  
cent.  
Sixty per cent *with* failures, and more than twice we could  
do,  
And a quarter-million to credit, and I saved it all for  
you!  
I thought—it doesn't matter—you seemed to favour your  
ma,  
But you're nearer forty than thirty, and I know the kind  
you are.  
Harrer an' Trinity College! I ought to ha' sent you to  
sea—  
But I stood you an education, an' what have you done for  
me?

The things I knew was proper you wouldn't thank me to  
give,  
And the things I knew was rotten you said was the way to  
live.  
For you muddled with books and pictures, an' china an'  
etchin's an' fans,  
And your rooms at college was beastly—more like a  
whore's than a man's;  
Till you married that thin-flanked woman, as white and as  
stale as a bone,  
An' she gave you your social nonsense; but where's that  
kid o' your own?  
I've seen your carriages blocking the half o' the Cromwell  
Road,  
But never the doctor's brougham to help the missus  
unload.  
(So there isn't even a grandchild, an' the Gloster family's  
done.)  
Not like your mother, she isn't. *She* carried her freight  
each run.  
But they died, the pore little beggars! At sea she had 'em  
—they died.  
Only you, an' you stood it. You haven't stood much  
beside.  
Weak, a liar, and idle, and mean as a collier's  
whelp  
Nosing for scraps in the galley. No help—my son was no  
help!  
So he gets three 'undred thousand, in trust and the  
interest paid.  
I wouldn't give it you, Dickie—you see, I made it in  
trade.  
You're saved from soiling your fingers, and if you have  
no child,  
It all comes back to the business. 'Gad, won't your wife  
be wild!

'Calls and calls in her carriage, her 'andkerchief up to 'er  
 eye:  
 'Daddy! dear daddy's dyin'!' and doing her best to cry.  
 Grateful? Oh, yes, I'm grateful, but keep her away from  
 here.  
 Your mother 'ud never ha' stood 'er, and, anyhow,  
 women are queer. . . .  
 There's women will say I've married a second time. Not  
 quite!  
 But give pore Aggie a hundred, and tell her your lawyers'll  
 fight.  
 She was the best o' the boiling—you'll meet her before it  
 ends.  
 I'm in for a row with the mother—I'll leave you settle my  
 friends.  
 For a man he must go with a woman, which women don't  
 understand—  
 Or the sort that say they can see it they aren't the marrying  
 brand.  
 But I wanted to speak o' your mother that's Lady Gloster  
 still;  
 I'm going to up and see her, without its hurting the will.  
 Here! Take your hand off the bell-pull. Five thousand's  
 waiting for you,  
 If you'll only listen a minute, and do as I bid you do.  
 They'll try to prove me crazy, and, if you bungle, they  
 can;  
 And I've only you to trust to! (O God, why ain't it a  
 man?)  
 There's some waste money on marbles, the same as  
 M'Cullough tried—  
 Marbles and mausoleums—but I call that sinful pride.  
 There's some ship bodies for burial—we've carried 'em,  
 soldered and packed;  
 Down in their wills they wrote it, and nobody called *them*  
 cracked.

But me—I've too much money, and people might . . .

All my fault:

It come o' hoping for grandsons and buying that Wokin'  
vault. . . .

I'm sick o' the 'ole dam' business. I'm going back where  
I came.

Dick, you're the son o' my body, and you'll take charge o'  
the same!

I want to lie by your mother, ten thousand mile away,  
And they'll want to send me to Woking; and that's where  
you'll earn your pay.

I've thought it out on the quiet, the same as it ought to be  
done—

Quiet, and decent, and proper—an' here's your orders, my  
son.

You know the Line? You don't, though. You write to  
the Board, and tell

Your father's death has upset you an' you're goin' to  
cruise for a spell,

An' you'd like the *Mary Gloster*—I've held her ready for  
this—

They'll put her in working order and you'll take her out  
as she is.

Yes, it was money idle when I patched her and laid her  
aside

(Thank God, I can pay for my fancies!)—the boat where  
your mother died,

By the Little Paternosters, as you come to the Union  
Bank,

We dropped her—I think I told you—and I pricked it off  
where she sank.

[ 'Tiny she looked on the grating—that oily, treacly sea—]  
'Hundred and Eighteen East, remember, and South just  
Three.

Easy bearings to carry—Three South—Three to the dot;  
But I gave McAndrew a copy in case of dying—or not.



And so you'll write to McAndrew, he's Chief of the  
Maori Line;  
They'll give him leave, if you ask 'em and say it's business  
o' mine.  
I built three boats for the Maoris, an' very well pleased  
they were,  
An' I've known Mac since the Fifties, and Mac knew me—  
and her.  
After the first stroke warned me I sent him the money to  
keep  
Against the time you'd claim it, committin' your dad to  
the deep;  
For you are the son o' my body, and Mac was my oldest  
friend,  
I've never asked 'im to dinner, but he'll see it out to the  
end.  
Stiff-necked Glasgow beggar! I've heard he's prayed for  
my soul,  
But he couldn't lie if you paid him, and he'd starve before  
he stole.  
He'll take the *Mary* in ballast—you'll find her a lively  
ship;  
And you'll take Sir Anthony Gloster, that goes on 'is  
wedding-trip,  
Lashed in our old deck-cabin with all three port-holes  
wide,  
The kick o' the screw beneath him and the round blue seas  
outside!  
Sir Anthony Gloster's carriage—our 'ouse-flag flyin'  
free—  
Ten thousand men on the pay-roll and forty freighters at  
sea!  
He made himself and a million, but this world is a flectin'  
show,  
And he'll go to the wife of 'is bosom the same as he ought  
to go—

By the heel of the Paternosters—there isn't a chance to  
 mistake—  
 And Mac'll pay you the money as soon as the bubbles  
 break!  
 Five thousand for six weeks' cruising, the staunchest  
 freighter afloat,  
 And Mac he'll give you your bonus the minute I'm out o'  
 the boat!  
 He'll take you round to Macassar, and you'll come back  
 alone;  
 He knows what I want o' the *Mary*. . . . I'll do what I  
 please with my own.  
 Your mother 'ud call it wasteful, but I've seven-and-thirty  
 more;  
 I'll come in my private carriage and bid it wait at the  
 door. . . .  
 For my son 'e was never a credit: 'e muddled with books  
 and art,  
 And 'e lived on Sir Anthony's money and 'e broke Sir  
 Anthony's heart.  
 There isn't even a grandchild, and the Gloster family's  
 done—  
 The only one you left me—O mother, the only one!  
 Harrer and Trinity College—me slavin' early an' late—  
 An' he thinks I'm dying crazy, and you're in Macassar  
 Strait!  
 Flesh o' my flesh, my dearie, for ever an' ever amen,  
 That first stroke come for a warning. I ought to ha' gone  
 to you then.  
 But—cheap repairs for a cheap 'un—the doctors said I'd  
 do.  
 Mary, why didn't *you* warn me? I've allus heeded to you,  
 Excep'—I know—about women; but you are a spirit  
 now;  
 An', wife, they was only women, and I was a man. That's  
 how.

An' a man 'e must go with a woman, as you *could* not  
 understand;  
 But I never talked 'em secrets. I paid 'em out o' hand.  
 Thank Gawd, I can pay for my fancies! Now what's five  
 thousand to me,  
 For a berth off the Paternosters in the haven where I  
 would be?  
 I believe in the Resurrection, if I read my Bible plain,  
 But I wouldn't trust 'em at Wokin'; we're safer at sea  
 again.  
 For the heart it shall go with the treasure—go down to  
 the sea in ships.  
 I'm sick of the hired women. I'll kiss my girl on her lips!  
 I'll be content with my fountain. I'll drink from my own  
 well,  
 And the wife of my youth shall charm me—an' the rest  
 can go to Hell!  
 (Dickie, *he* will, that's certain.) I'll lie in our standin'-bed,  
 An' Mac'll take her in ballast—an' she trims best by the  
 head. . . .  
 Down by the head an' sinkin', her fires are drawn and cold,  
 And the water's splashin' hollow on the skin of the empty  
 hold—  
 Churning an' choking and chuckling, quiet and scummy  
 and dark—  
 Full to her lower hatches and risin' steady. Hark!  
 That was the after-bulkhead. . . . She's flooded from  
 stem to stern. . . .  
 'Never seen death yet, Dickie? . . . Well, now is your  
 time to learn!

# THE BALLAD OF THE 'BOLIVAR'

1890

*Seven men from all the world back to Docks again,  
Rolling down the Ratcliffe Road drunk and raising  
Cain.*

*Give the girls another drink 'fore we sign away—  
We that took the Bolivar out across the Bay!*

We put out from Sunderland loaded down with rails;  
We put back to Sunderland 'cause our cargo shifted;  
We put out from Sunderland—met the winter gales—  
Seven days and seven nights to The Start we drifted.

Racketing her rivets loose, smoke-stack white as  
snow,

All the coals adrift adeck, half the rails below,  
Leaking like a lobster-pot, steering like a dray—  
Out we took the *Bolivar*, out across the Bay!

One by one the Lights came up, winked and let us by;  
Mile by mile we waddled on, coal and fo'c'sle short;  
Met a blow that laid us down, heard a bulkhead fly;  
Left The Wolf behind us with a two-foot list to port.

Trailing like a wounded duck, working out her  
soul;

Clanging like a smithy-shop after every roll;  
Just a funnel and a mast lurching through the spray—  
So we threshed the *Bolivar* out across the Bay!

Felt her hog and felt her sag, betted when she'd break;  
Wondered every time she raced if she'd stand the shock;  
Heard the seas like drunken men pounding at her strake;  
Hoped the Lord 'ud keep His thumb on the plumper-  
block!



Banged against the iron decks, bilges choked with  
coal;

Flayed and frozen foot and hand, sick of heart and  
soul;

'Last we prayed she'd buck herself into Judgment  
Day—

Hi! we cursed the *Bolivar* knocking round the Bay!

O her nose flung up to sky, groaning to be still—

Up and down and back we went, never time for breath;

Then the money paid at Lloyd's caught her by the keel,

And the stars ran round and round dancin' at our death!

Aching for an hour's sleep, dozing off between:

'Heard the rotten rivets draw when she took it green;

'Watched the compass chase its tail like a cat at play—

That was on the *Bolivar*, south across the Bay!

Once we saw between the squalls, lyin' head to swell—

Mad with work and weariness, wishin' they was we—

Some damned Liner's lights go by like a grand hotel;

'Cheered her from the *Bolivar* swampin' in the sea.

Then a greybeard cleared us out, then the skipper  
laughed;

'Boys, the wheel has gone to Hell—rig the winches  
aft!

'Yoke the kicking rudder-head—get her under way!'

So we steered her, pully-haul, out across the Bay!

Just a pack o' rotten plates puttied up with tar,

In we came, an' time enough, 'cross Bilbao Bar.

Overloaded, undermanned, meant to founder, we

Euchred God Almighty's storm, bluffed the Eternal Sea!

*Seven men from all the world back to town again,  
Rollin' down the Ratcliffe Road drunk and raising Cain :  
Seven men from out of Hell. Ain't the owners gay,  
Cause we took the Bolivar safe across the Bay?*

## A SONG IN STORM

1914-18

**B**e well assured that on our side  
The abiding oceans fight,  
Though headlong wind and heaping tide  
Make us their sport to-night.  
By force of weather, not of war,  
In jeopardy we steer :  
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it shall appear  
How in all time of our distress,  
And our deliverance too,  
The game is more than the player of the game,  
And the ship is more than the crew!

Out of the mist into the mirk  
The glimmering combers roll.  
Almost these mindless waters work  
As though they had a soul—  
Almost as though they leagued to whelm  
Our flag beneath their green :  
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it shall be seen, etc.

Be well assured, though wave and wind  
Have mightier blows in store,  
That we who keep the watch assigned  
Must stand to it the more ;

And as our streaming bows rebuke  
Each billow's baulked career,  
Sing, welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it is made clear, etc.

No matter though our decks be swept  
And mast and timber crack—  
We can make good all loss except  
The loss of turning back.  
So, 'twixt these Devils and our deep  
Let courteous trumpets sound,  
To welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it will be found, etc.

Be well assured, though in our power  
Is nothing left to give  
But chance and place to meet the hour,  
And leave to strive to live,  
Till these dissolve our Order holds,  
Our Service binds us here.  
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy  
Whereby it is made clear  
How in all time of our distress,  
As in our triumph too,  
The game is more than the player of the game,  
And the ship is more than the crew!

# THE LAST CHANTEY

1892

*'And there was no more sea.'*

Thus said the Lord in the Vault above the Cherubim,  
Calling to the Angels and the Souls in their degree:  
'Lo! Earth has passed away  
On the smoke of Judgment Day.  
That Our word may be established shall We gather up  
the sea?'

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners:  
'Plague upon the hurricane that made us furl and flee!  
But the war is done between us,  
In the deep the Lord hath seen us—  
Our bones we'll leave the barracout', and God may sink  
the sea!'

Then said the soul of Judas that betrayèd Him:  
'Lord, hast Thou forgotten Thy covenant with me?  
How once a year I go  
To cool me on the floe?  
And Ye take my day of mercy if Ye take away the sea.'

Then said the soul of the Angel of the Off-shore Wind:  
(He that bits the thunder when the bull-mouthed  
breakers flee):  
'I have watch and ward to keep  
O'er Thy wonders on the deep,  
And Ye take mine honour from me if Ye take away the  
sea!'

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners:  
'Nay, but we were angry, and a hasty folk are we.



If we worked the ship together  
Till she foundered in foul weather,  
Are we babes that we should clamour for a vengeance  
on the sea?'

Then said the souls of the slaves that men threw overboard :  
'Kennelled in the picaroon a weary band were we ;  
But Thy arm was strong to save,  
And it touched us on the wave,  
And we drownded the long tides idle till Thy Trumpets  
tore the sea.'

Then cried the soul of the stout Apostle Paul to God :  
'Once we frapped a ship, and she laboured woundily.  
There were fourteen score of these,  
And they blessed Thee on their knees,  
When they learned Thy Grace and Glory under Malta  
by the sea!'

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners,  
Plucking at their harps, and they plucked unhandily :  
'Our thumbs are rough and tarred,  
And the tune is something hard—  
May we lift a Deepsea Chantey such as seamen use at  
sea?'

Then said the souls of the gentlemen-adventurers—  
Fettered wrist to bar all for red iniquity :  
'Ho, we revel in our chains  
O'er the sorrow that was Spain's!  
Heave or sink it, leave or drink it, we were masters of  
the sea!'

Up spake the soul of a grey Gothavn 'speckshioner—  
(He that led the flenching in the fleets of fair Dundee)

‘Oh, the ice-blink white and near,  
And the bowhead breaching clear!  
Will Ye whelm them all for wantonness that wallow in  
the sea?’

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners,  
Crying: ‘Under Heaven, here is neither lead nor lee!  
Must we sing for evermore  
On the windless, glassy floor?  
Take back your golden fiddles and we’ll beat to open  
sea!’

Then stooped the Lord, and He called the good sea up to  
Him,  
And ’stablishèd its borders unto all eternity,  
That such as have no pleasure  
For to praise the Lord by measure,  
They may enter into galleons and serve Him on the sea.

*Sun, Wind, and Cloud shall fail not from the face of it,  
Stinging, ringing spindrift, nor the fulmar flying free ;  
And the ships shall go abroad  
To the Glory of the Lord  
Who heard the silly sailor-folk and gave them back their  
sea!*

## THE LONG TRAIL

There’s a whisper down the field where the year has  
shot her yield,  
And the ricks stand grey to the sun,  
Singing: ‘Over then, come over, for the bee has quit the  
clover,  
‘And your English summer’s done.’

You have heard the beat of the off-shore wind,  
And the thresh of the deep-sea rain;  
You have heard the song—how long? how long?  
Pull out on the trail again!  
Ha' done with the Tents of Shem, dear lass,  
We've seen the seasons through,  
And it's time to turn on the old trail, our own trail,  
the out trail,  
Pull out, pull out, on the Long Trail—the trail that is  
always new!

It's North you may run to the rime-ringed sun  
Or South to the blind Horn's hate;  
Or East all the way into Mississippi Bay,  
Or West to the Golden Gate—  
Where the blindest bluffs hold good, dear lass,  
And the wildest tales are true,  
And the men bulk big on the old trail, our own trail,  
the out trail,  
And life runs large on the Long Trail—the trail  
that is always new.

The days are sick and cold, and the skies are grey and old  
And the twice-breathed airs blow damp;  
And I'd sell my tired soul for the bucking beam-sea roll  
Of a black Bilbao tramp,  
With her load-line over her hatch, dear lass,  
And a drunken Dago crew,  
And her nose held down on the old trail, our own  
trail, the out trail  
From Cadiz south on the Long Trail—the trail that  
is always new.

There be triple ways to take, of the eagle or the snake,  
Or the way of a man with a maid;

But the sweetest way to me is a ship's upon the sea  
In the heel of the North-East Trade.

Can you hear the crash on her bows, dear lass,  
And the drum of the racing screw,  
As she ships it green on the old trail, our own trail,  
the out trail,  
As she lifts and 'scends on the Long Trail—the trail  
that is always new?

See the shaking funnels roar, with the Peter at the fore,  
And the fenders grind and heave,  
And the derricks clack and grate, as the tackle hooks the  
crate,  
And the fall-rope whines through the sheave;  
It's 'Gang-plank up and in,' dear lass,  
It's 'Hawsers warp her through!'  
And it's 'All clear aft' on the old trail, our own  
trail, the out trail,  
We're backing down on the Long Trail—the trail  
that is always new.

O the mutter overside, when the port-fog holds us tied,  
And the sirens hoot their dread,  
When foot by foot we creep o'er the hueless, viewless deep  
To the sob of the questing lead!  
It's down by the Lower Hope, dear lass,  
With the Gunfleet Sands in view,  
Till the Mouse swings green on the old trail, our  
own trail, the out trail,  
And the Gull Light lifts on the Long Trail—the  
trail that is always new.

O the blazing tropic night, when the wake's a welt of light  
That holds the hot sky tame,  
And the steady fore-foot snores through the planet-  
powdered floors



Where the scared whale flukes in flame!

Her plates are flaked by the sun, dear lass,

And her ropes are taut with the dew,

For we're booming down on the old trail, our own  
trail, the out trail,

We're sagging south on the Long Trail—the trail  
that is always new.

Then home, get her home, where the drunken rollers comb,

And the shouting seas drive by,

And the engines stamp and ring, and the wet bows reel  
and swing,

And the Southern Cross rides high!

Yes, the old lost stars wheel back, dear lass,

That blaze in the velvet blue.

They're all old friends on the old trail, our own  
trail, the out trail,

They're God's own guides on the Long Trail—the  
trail that is always new.

Fly forward, O my heart, from the Foreland to the Start—

We're steaming all too slow,

And it's twenty thousand mile to our little lazy isle

Where the trumpet-orchids blow!

You have heard the call of the off-shore wind

And the voice of the deep-sea rain;

You have heard the song—how long?—how long?

Pull out on the trail again!

The Lord knows what we may find, dear lass,

And The Deuce knows what we may do—

But we're back once more on the old trail, our own trail,  
the out trail,

We're down, hull-down, on the Long Trail—the trail that  
is always new!

## AVE IMPERATRIX!

*(Written on the occasion of the attempt to assassinate  
Queen Victoria in March 1882)*

From every quarter of your land  
They give God thanks who turned away  
Death and the needy madman's hand,  
Death-fraught, which menaced you that day.

One school of many made to make  
Men who shall hold it dearest right  
To battle for their ruler's sake,  
And stake their being in the fight,

Sends greeting humble and sincere—  
Though verse be rude and poor and mean—  
To you, the greatest as most dear—  
Victoria, by God's grace Our Queen!

Such greeting as should come from those  
Whose fathers faced the Sepoy hordes,  
Or served you in the Russian snows,  
And, dying, left their sons their swords.

And some of us have fought for you  
Already in the Afghan pass—  
Or where the scarce-seen smoke-puffs flew  
From Boer marksmen in the grass;

And all are bred to do your will  
By land and sea—wherever flies  
The Flag, to fight and follow still,  
And work your Empire's destinies.

Once more we greet you, though unseen  
Our greeting be, and coming slow.  
Trust us, if need arise, O Queen,  
We shall not tarry with the blow!

## A SONG OF THE ENGLISH

1893

*F*air is our lot—O goodly is our heritage!  
(Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in your  
mirth!)

*For the Lord our God Most High  
He hath made the deep as dry,  
He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends of all the Earth!*

*Yea, though we sinned, and our rulers went from righteous-  
ness—*

*Deep in all dishonour though we stained our garments' hem,  
Oh, be ye not dismayed,  
Though we stumbled and we strayed,  
We were led by evil counsellors—the Lord shall deal with  
them!*

*Hold ye the Faith—the Faith our Fathers sealèd us;  
Whoring not with visions—overwise and overstale.  
Except ye pay the Lord  
Single heart and single sword,  
Of your children in their bondage He shall ask them treble-  
tale!*

*Keep ye the Law—be swift in all obedience—  
Clear the land of evil, drive the road and bridge the ford.*

*Make ye sure to each his own  
That he reap where he hath sown ;  
By the peace among Our peoples let men know we serve the  
Lord!*

*Hear now a song—a song of broken interludes—  
A song of little cunning; of a singer nothing worth.  
Through the naked words and mean  
May ye see the truth between,  
As the singer knew and touched it in the ends of all the  
Earth!*

### *The Coastwise Lights*

Our brows are bound with spindrift and the weed is on  
our knees ;  
Our loins are battered 'neath us by the swinging smoking  
seas.

From reef and rock and skerry—over headland, ness, and  
voe—

The Coastwise Lights of England watch the ships of Eng-  
land go!

Through the endless summer evenings, on the lineless,  
level floors ;

Through the yelling Channel tempest when the siren hoots  
and roars—

By day the dipping house-flag and by night the rocket's  
trail—

As the sheep that graze behind us so we know them where  
they hail.

We bridge across the dark, and bid the helmsman have a  
care,

The flash that, wheeling inland, wakes his sleeping wife to  
prayer.



From our vexed eyries, head to gale, we bind in burning  
chains  
The lover from the sea-rim drawn—his love in English  
lanes.

We greet the clippers wing-and-wing that race the Southern  
wool;  
We warn the crawling cargo-tanks of Bremen, Leith, and  
Hull;  
To each and all our equal lamp at peril of the sea—  
The white wall-sided warships or the whalers of Dundee!

Come up, come in from Eastward, from the guardports of  
the Morn!  
Beat up, beat in from Southerly, O gipsies of the Horn!  
Swift shuttles of an Empire's loom that weave us main to  
main,  
The Coastwise Lights of England give you welcome back  
again!

Go, get you gone up-Channel with the sea-crust on your  
plates;  
Go, get you into London with the burden of your freights!  
Haste, for they talk of Empire there, and say, if any  
seek,  
The Lights of England sent you and by silence shall ye  
speak!

### *The Song of the Dead*

*Hear now the Song of the Dead—in the North by the torn  
berg-edges—  
They that look still to the Pole, asleep by their hide-stripped  
sledges.*

*Song of the Dead in the South—in the sun by their skeleton  
horses,  
Where the warrigal whimpers and bays through the dust of  
the sere river-courses.*

*Song of the Dead in the East—in the heat-rotted jungle-  
hollows,  
Where the dog-ape barks in the kloof—in the brake of the  
buffalo-wallows.*

*Song of the Dead in the West—in the Barrens, the pass that  
betrayed them,  
Where the wolverine tumbles their packs from the camp and  
the grave-mound they made them;  
Hear now the Song of the Dead!*

I

We were dreamers, dreaming greatly, in the man-stifled  
town;  
We yearned beyond the sky-line where the strange roads  
go down.  
Came the Whisper, came the Vision, came the Power with  
the Need,  
Till the Soul that is not man's soul was lent us to lead.  
As the deer breaks—as the steer breaks—from the herd  
where they graze,  
In the faith of little children we went on our ways.  
Then the wood failed—then the food failed—then the last  
water dried—  
In the faith of little children we lay down and died.  
On the sand-drift—on the veldt-side—in the fern-scrub we  
lay,  
That our sons might follow after by the bones on the  
way.  
Follow after—follow after! We have watered the root,  
And the bud has come to blossom that ripens for fruit!

Follow after—we are waiting, by the trails that we lost,  
For the sounds of many footsteps, for the tread of a  
host.

Follow after—follow after—for the harvest is sown:  
By the bones about the wayside ye shall come to your own!

*When Drake went down to the Horn  
And England was crowned thereby,  
'Twixt seas unsailed and shores unhailed  
Our Lodge—our Lodge was born  
(And England was crowned thereby!)*

*Which never shall close again  
By day nor yet by night,  
While man shall take his life to stake  
At risk of shoal or main  
(By day nor yet by night)*

*But standeth even so  
As now we witness here,  
While men depart, of joyful heart,  
Adventure for to know  
(As now bear witness here!)*

## II

We have fed our sea for a thousand years  
And she calls us, still unfed,  
Though there's never a wave of all her waves  
But marks our English dead:  
We have strawed our best to the weed's unrest,  
To the shark and the sheering gull.  
If blood be the price of admiralty,  
Lord God, we ha' paid in full!

There's never a flood goes shoreward now  
But lifts a keel we manned;  
There's never an ebb goes seaward now  
But drops our dead on the sand—  
But slinks our dead on the sands forlore,  
From the Ducies to the Swin.  
If blood be the price of admiralty,  
If blood be the price of admiralty,  
Lord God, we ha' paid it in!

We must feed our sea for a thousand years,  
For that is our doom and pride,  
As it was when they sailed with the *Golden Hind*,  
Or the wreck that struck last tide—  
Or the wreck that lies on the spouting reef  
Where the ghastly blue-lights flare.  
If blood be the price of admiralty,  
If blood be the price of admiralty,  
If blood be the price of admiralty,  
Lord God, we ha' bought it fair!

### *The Deep-Sea Cables*

The wrecks dissolve above us; their dust drops down  
from afar—  
Down to the dark, to the utter dark, where the blind white  
sea-snakes are.  
There is no sound, no echo of sound, in the deserts of the  
deep,  
Or the great grey level plains of ooze where the shell-  
burred cables creep.  
Here in the womb of the world—here on the tie-ribs of  
earth  
Words, and the words of men, flicker and flutter and  
beat—



Warning, sorrow, and gain, salutation and mirth—  
For a Power troubles the Still that has neither voice nor  
feet.

They have wakened the timeless Things; they have killed  
their father Time;  
Joining hands in the gloom, a league from the last of the  
sun.  
Hush! Men talk to-day o'er the waste of the ultimate  
slime,  
And a new Word runs between: whispering, 'Let us be  
one!'

### *The Song of the Sons*

One from the ends of the earth—gifts at an open  
door—  
Treason has much, but we, Mother, thy sons have more!  
From the whine of a dying man, from the snarl of a wolf-  
pack freed,  
Turn, and the world is thine. Mother, be proud of thy  
seed!  
Count, are we feeble or few? Hear, is our speech so rude?  
Look, are we poor in the land? Judge, are we men of The  
Blood?

Those that have stayed at thy knees, Mother, go call them  
in—  
We that were bred overseas wait and would speak with our  
kin.  
Not in the dark do we fight—haggle and flout and gibe;  
Selling our love for a price, loaning our hearts for a  
bribe.  
Gifts have we only to-day—Love without promise or fee—  
Hear, for thy children speak, from the uttermost parts of  
the sea!

## *The Song of the Cities*

### BOMBAY

Royal and Dower-royal, I the Queen  
Fronting thy richest sea with richer hands—  
A thousand mills roar through me where I glean  
All races from all lands.

### CALCUTTA

Me the Sea-captain loved, the River built,  
Wealth sought and Kings adventured life to hold.  
Hail, England! I am Asia—Power on silt,  
Death in my hands, but Gold!

### MADRAS

Clive kissed me on the mouth and eyes and brow,  
Wonderful kisses, so that I became  
Crowned above Queens—a withered beldame now,  
Brooding on ancient fame.

### RANGOON

Hail, Mother! Do they call me rich in trade?  
Little care I, but hear the shorn priest drone,  
And watch my silk-clad lovers, man by maid,  
Laugh 'neath my Shwe Dagon.

### SINGAPORE

Hail, Mother! East and West must seek my aid  
Ere the spent hull may dare the ports afar.  
The second doorway of the wide world's trade  
Is mine to loose or bar.

## HONG-KONG

Hail, Mother! Hold me fast; my Praya sleeps  
Under innumerable keels to-day.  
Yet guard (and landward), or to-morrow sweeps  
Thy warships down the bay!

## HALIFAX

Into the mist my guardian prow put forth,  
Behind the mist my virgin ramparts lie,  
The Warden of the Honour of the North,  
Sleepless and veiled am I!

## QUEBEC AND MONTREAL

Peace is our portion. Yet a whisper rose,  
Foolish and causeless, half in jest, half hate.  
Now wake we and remember mighty blows,  
And, fearing no man, wait!

## VICTORIA

From East to West the circling word has passed,  
Till West is East beside our land-locked blue;  
From East to West the tested chain holds fast,  
The well-forged link rings true!

## CAPETOWN

Hail! Snatched and bartered oft from hand to  
hand,  
I dream my dream, by rock and heath and pine,  
Of Empire to the northward. Ay, one land  
From Lion's Head to Line!

## MELBOURNE

Greeting! Nor fear nor favour won us place,  
Got between greed of gold and dread of drouth,  
Loud-voiced and reckless as the wild tide-race  
That whips our harbour-mouth!

## SYDNEY

Greeting! My birth-stain have I turned to good;  
Forcing strong wills perverse to steadfastness:  
The first flush of the tropics in my blood,  
And at my feet Success!

## BRISBANE

The northern stock beneath the southern skies—  
I build a Nation for an Empire's need,  
Suffer a little, and my land shall rise,  
Queen over lands indeed!

## HOBART

Man's love first found me; man's hate made me Hell;  
For my babes' sake I cleansed those infamies.  
Earnest for leave to live and labour well,  
God flung me peace and ease.

## AUCKLAND

Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite, apart—  
On us, on us the unswerving season smiles,  
Who wonder 'mid our fern why men depart  
To seek the Happy Isles!



## *England's Answer*

Truly ye come of The Blood, slower to bless than to ban,  
Little used to lie down at the bidding of any man—  
Flesh of the flesh that I bred, bone of the bone that I bare;  
Stark as your sons shall be—stern as your fathers were.  
Deeper than speech our love, stronger than life our tether,  
But we do not fall on the neck nor kiss when we come  
together.

My arm is nothing weak, my strength is not gone by;  
Sons, I have borne many sons, but my dugs are not dry.  
Look, I have made ye a place and opened wide the doors,  
That ye may talk together, your Barons and Councillors—  
Wards of the Outer March, Lords of the Lower Seas,  
Ay, talk to your grey mother that bore you on her knees!—  
That ye may talk together, brother to brother's face—  
Thus for the good of your peoples—thus for the Pride of  
the Race.

Also, we will make promise. So long as The Blood endures,  
I shall know that your good is mine: ye shall feel that my  
strength is yours:

In the day of Armageddon, at the last great fight of all,  
That Our House stand together and the pillars do not  
fall.

Draw now the threefold knot firm on the ninefold bands,  
And the Law that ye make shall be law after the rule of  
your lands.

This for the waxen Heath, and that for the Wattle-bloom,  
This for the Maple-Leaf, and that for the Southern Broom.  
The Law that ye make shall be law and I do not press my  
will,

Because ye are Sons of The Blood and call me Mother still.  
Now must ye speak to your kinsmen and they must speak  
to you,

After the use of the English, in straight-flung words and  
few.

Go to your work and be strong, halting not in your ways,  
Baulking the end half-won for an instant dole of praise.  
Stand to your work and be wise—certain of sword and pen,  
Who are neither children nor Gods, but men in a world of  
men!

## THE GIPSY TRAIL

The white moth to the closing bine,  
The bee to the opened clover,  
And the gipsy blood to the gipsy blood  
Ever the wide world over.

Ever the wide world over, lass,  
Ever the trail held true,  
Over the world and under the world,  
And back at the last to you.

Out of the dark of the gorgio camp,  
Out of the grime and the gray  
(Morning waits at the end of the world),  
Gipsy, come away!

The wild boar to the sun-dried swamp,  
The red crane to her reed,  
And the Romany lass to the Romany lad  
By the tie of a roving breed.

The pied snake to the rifted rock,  
The buck to the stony plain,  
And the Romany lass to the Romany lad,  
And both to the road again.

Both to the road again, again!  
Out on a clean sea-track—  
Follow the cross of the gipsy trail  
Over the world and back!

Follow the Romany patteran  
North where the blue bergs sail,  
And the bows are gray with the frozen spray,  
And the masts are shod with mail.

Follow the Romany patteran  
Sheer to the Austral Light,  
Where the besom of God is the wild South wind,  
Sweeping the sea-floors white.

Follow the Romany patteran  
West to the sinking sun,  
Till the junk-sails lift through the houseless drift,  
And the east and the west are one.

Follow the Romany patteran  
East where the silence broods  
By a purple wave on an opal beach  
In the hush of the Mahim woods.

‘The wild hawk to the wind-swept sky,  
The deer to the wholesome wold,  
And the heart of a man to the heart of a maid,  
As it was in the days of old.’

The heart of a man to the heart of a maid—  
Light of my tents, be fleet.  
Morning waits at the end of the world,  
And the world is all at our feet!

# OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS

1897

*(Canadian Preferential Tariff, 1897)*

A Nation spoke to a Nation,  
A Queen sent word to a Throne:  
'Daughter am I in my mother's house,  
But mistress in my own.  
The gates are mine to open,  
As the gates are mine to close,  
And I set my house in order,'  
Said our Lady of the Snows.

'Neither with laughter nor weeping,  
Fear or the child's amaze—  
Soberly under the White Man's law  
My white men go their ways.  
Not for the Gentiles' clamour—  
Insult or threat of blows—  
Bow we the knee to Baal,'  
Said our Lady of the Snows.

'My speech is clean and single,  
I talk of common things—  
Words of the wharf and the market-place  
And the ware the merchant brings:  
Favour to those I favour,  
But a stumbling-block to my foes.  
Many there be that hate us,'  
Said our Lady of the Snows.

'I called my chiefs to council  
In the din of a troubled year;  
For the sake of a sign ye would not see,  
And a word ye would not hear.



This is our message and answer ;  
This is the path we chose :  
For we be also a people,'  
Said our Lady of the Snows.

'Carry the word to my sisters—  
To the Queens of the East and the South.  
I have proven faith in the Heritage  
By more than the word of the mouth.  
They that are wise may follow  
Ere the world's war-trumpet blows,  
But I—I am first in the battle,'  
Said our Lady of the Snows.

*A Nation spoke to a Nation,  
A Throne sent word to a Throne :  
'Daughter am I in my mother's house,  
But mistress in my own.  
The gates are mine to open,  
As the gates are mine to close,  
And I abide by my Mother's House,'  
Said our Lady of the Snows.*

# THE IRISH GUARDS

1918

**W**e're not so old in the Army List,  
But we're not so young at our trade,  
For we had the honour at Fontenoy  
Of meeting the Guards' Brigade.  
'Twas Lally, Dillon, Bulkeley, Clare,  
And Lee that led us then,  
And after a hundred and seventy years  
We're fighting for France again!

*Old Days! The wild geese are fighting,  
Head to the storm as they faced it before!  
For where there are Irish there's bound to be fighting,  
And when there's no fighting, it's Ireland no more!  
Ireland no more!*

The fashion's all for khaki now,  
But once through France we went  
Full-dressed in scarlet Army cloth  
The English—left at Ghent.  
They're fighting on our side to-day  
But, before they changed their clothes,  
The half of Europe knew our fame,  
As all of Ireland knows!

*Old Days! The wild geese are flying,  
Head to the storm as they faced it before!  
For where there are Irish there's memory undying,  
And when we forget, it is Ireland no more!  
Ireland no more!*

From Barry Wood to Gouzeaucourt,  
From Boyne to Pilkem Ridge  
The ancient days come back no more  
Than water under the bridge.

But the bridge it stands and the water runs  
As red as yesterday,  
And the Irish move to the sound of the guns  
Like salmon to the sea.

*Old Days! The wild geese are ranging,  
Head to the storm as they faced it before!  
For where there are Irish their hearts are unchanging,  
And when they are changed, it is Ireland no more!  
Ireland no more!*

We're not so old in the Army List,  
But we're not so new in the ring,  
For we carried our packs with Marshal Saxe  
When Louis was our King.  
But Douglas Haig's our Marshal now  
And we're King George's men,  
And after one hundred and seventy years  
We're fighting for France again!

*Ah, France! And did we stand by you,  
When life was made splendid with gifts and rewards?  
Ah, France! And will we deny you  
In the hour of your agony, Mother of Swords?  
Old Days! The wild geese are flighting,  
Head to the storm as they faced it before!  
For where there are Irish there's loving and fighting,  
And when we stop either, it's Ireland no more!  
Ireland no more!*

## THE SETTLER

1903

*(South African War ended, May 1902)*

Here, where my fresh-turned furrows run,  
And the deep soil glistens red,  
I will repair the wrong that was done  
To the living and the dead.

Here, where the senseless bullet fell,  
And the barren shrapnel burst,  
I will plant a tree, I will dig a well,  
Against the heat and the thirst.

Here, in a large and a sunlit land,  
Where no wrong bites to the bone,  
I will lay my hand in my neighbour's hand,  
And together we will atone  
For the set folly and the red breach  
And the black waste of it all;  
Giving and taking counsel each  
Over the cattle-kraal.

Here will we join against our foes—  
The hailstroke and the storm,  
And the red and rustling cloud that blows  
The locust's mile-deep swarm.  
Frost and murrain and flood let loose  
Shall launch us side by side  
In the holy wars that have no truce  
'Twixt seed and harvest-tide.

Earth, where we rode to slay or be slain,  
Our love shall redeem unto life.  
We will gather and lead to her lips again  
The waters of ancient strife,  
From the far and the fiercely guarded streams  
And the pools where we lay in wait,  
Till the corn cover our evil dreams  
And the young corn our hate.

And when we bring old fights to mind,  
We will not remember the sin—  
If there be blood on his head of my kind,  
Or blood on my head of his kin—



For the ungrazed upland, the untilled lea  
Cry, and the fields forlorn :  
'The dead must bury their dead, but ye—  
Ye serve an host unborn.'

Bless then, Our God, the new-yoked plough  
And the good beasts that draw,  
And the bread we eat in the sweat of our brow  
According to Thy Law.  
After us cometh a multitude—  
Prosper the work of our hands,  
That we may feed with our land's food  
The folk of all our lands!

Here, in the waves and the troughs of the plains  
Where the healing stillness lies,  
And the vast, benignant sky restrains  
And the long days make wise—  
Bless to our use the rain and the sun  
And the blind seed in its bed,  
That we may repair the wrong that was done  
To the living and the dead!

## SUSSEX

1902

God gave all men all earth to love,  
But, since our hearts are small,  
Ordained for each one spot should prove  
Belovèd over all;  
That, as He watched Creation's birth,  
So we, in godlike mood,  
May of our love create our earth  
And see that it is good.

So one shall Baltic pines content,  
As one some Surrey glade,  
Or one the palm-grove's droned lament  
Before Levuka's Trade.  
Each to his choice, and I rejoice  
The lot has fallen to me  
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—  
Yea, Sussex by the sea!

No tender-hearted garden crowns,  
No bosomed woods adorn  
Our blunt, bow-headed, whale-backed Downs,  
But gnarled and writhen thorn—  
Bare slopes where chasing shadows skim,  
And, through the gaps revealed,  
Belt upon belt, the wooded, dim,  
Blue goodness of the Weald.

Clean of officious fence or hedge,  
Half-wild and wholly tame,  
The wise turf cloaks the white cliff-edge  
As when the Romans came.  
What sign of those that fought and died  
At shift of sword and sword?  
The barrow and the camp abide,  
The sunlight and the sward.

Here leaps ashore the full Sou'west  
All heavy-winged with brine,  
Here lies above the folded crest  
The Channel's leaden line;  
And here the sea-fogs lap and cling,  
And here, each warning each,  
The sheep-bells and the ship-bells ring  
Along the hidden beach.

We have no waters to delight  
Our broad and brookless vales—  
Only the dewpond on the height  
Unfed, that never fails—  
Whereby no tattered herbage tells  
Which way the season flies—  
Only our close-bit thyme that smells  
Like dawn in Paradise.

Here through the strong and shadeless days  
The tinkling silence thrills;  
Or little, lost, Down churches praise  
The Lord who made the hills:  
But here the Old Gods guard their round,  
And, in her secret heart,  
The heathen kingdom Wilfrid found  
Dreams, as she dwells, apart.

Though all the rest were all my share,  
With equal soul I'd see  
Her nine-and-thirty sisters fair,  
Yet none more fair than she.  
Choose ye your need from Thames to Tweed,  
And I will choose instead  
Such lands as lie 'twixt Rake and Rye,  
Black Down and Beachy Head.

I will go out against the sun  
Where the rolled scarp retires,  
And the Long Man of Wilmington  
Looks naked toward the shires;  
And east till doubling Rother crawls  
To find the fickle tide,  
By dry and sea-forgotten walls,  
Our ports of stranded pride.

I will go north about the shaws  
And the deep ghylls that breed  
Huge oaks and old, the which we hold  
No more than Sussex weed;  
Or south where windy Piddinghoe's  
Begilded dolphin veers,  
And red beside wide-bankèd Ouse  
Lie down our Sussex steers.

So to the land our hearts we give  
Till the sure magic strike,  
And Memory, Use, and Love make live  
Us and our fields alike—  
That deeper than our speech and thought,  
Beyond our reason's sway,  
Clay of the pit whence we were wrought  
Yearns to its fellow-clay.

*God gives all men all earth to love,  
But, since man's heart is small,  
Ordains for each one spot shall prove  
Belovèd over all.*

*Each to his choice, and I rejoice  
The lot has fallen to me  
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—  
Yea, Sussex by the sea!*

## THE VAMPIRE

1897

**A** fool there was and he made his prayer  
(Even as you and I!)  
To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair  
(We called her the woman who did not care)  
But the fool he called her his lady fair—  
(Even as you and I!)



*Oh, the years we waste and the tears we waste  
And the work of our head and hand  
Belong to the woman who did not know  
(And now we know that she never could know)  
And did not understand!*

A fool there was and his goods he spent  
(Even as you and I!)  
Honour and faith and a sure intent  
(And it wasn't the least what the lady meant)  
But a fool must follow his natural bent  
(Even as you and I!)

*Oh, the toil we lost and the spoil we lost  
And the excellent things we planned  
Belong to the woman who didn't know why  
(And now we know that she never knew why)  
And did not understand!*

The fool was stripped to his foolish hide  
(Even as you and I!)  
Which she might have seen when she threw him aside—  
(But it isn't on record the lady tried)  
So some of him lived but the most of him died—  
(Even as you and I!)

*And it isn't the shame and it isn't the blame  
That stings like a white-hot brand—  
It's coming to know that she never knew why  
(Seeing, at last, she could never know why)  
And never could understand!*

# WHEN EARTH'S LAST PICTURE IS PAINTED

1892

*(L'Envoi to 'The Seven Seas')*

When Earth's last picture is painted and the tubes are  
twisted and dried,  
When the oldest colours have faded, and the youngest  
critic has died,  
We shall rest, and, faith, we shall need it—lie down for an  
æon or two,  
Till the Master of All Good Workmen shall put us to work  
anew.

And those that were good shall be happy: they shall sit in  
a golden chair;  
They shall splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of  
comets' hair.  
They shall find real saints to draw from—Magdalene,  
Peter, and Paul;  
They shall work for an age at a sitting and never be tired  
at all!

And only The Master shall praise us, and only The Master  
shall blame;  
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work  
for fame,  
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his  
separate star,  
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as  
They are!

# THE BALLAD OF EAST AND WEST

1889

*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain  
shall meet,  
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment  
Seat;  
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor  
Birth,  
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come  
from the ends of the earth!*

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Border-side,  
And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's  
pride.

He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn  
and the day,

And turned the calkins upon her feet, and ridden her far  
away.

Then up and spoke the Colonel's son that led a troop of  
the Guides:

'Is there never a man of all my men can say where Kamal  
hides?'

Then up and spoke Mohammed Khan, the son of the  
Ressaldar:

'If ye know the track of the morning-mist, ye know where  
his pickets are.

At dusk he harries the Abazai—at dawn he is into Bonair,  
But he must go by Fort Bukloh to his own place to fare.  
So if ye gallop to Fort Bukloh as fast as a bird can fly,  
By the favour of God ye may cut him off ere he win to  
the Tongue of Jagai.

But if he be past the Tongue of Jagai, right swiftly turn  
ye then,

For the length and the breadth of that grisly plain is sown  
with Kamal's men.

There is rock to the left, and rock to the right, and low  
lean thorn between,  
And ye may hear a breech-bolt snick where never a man  
is seen.'

The Colonel's son has taken horse, and a raw rough dun  
was he,  
With the mouth of a bell and the heart of Hell and the head  
of a gallows-tree.

The Colonel's son to the Fort has won, they bid him stay  
to eat—

Who rides at the tail of a Border thief, he sits not long at  
his meat.

He's up and away from Fort Bukloh as fast as he can  
fly,

Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of the  
Tongue of Jagai,

Till he was aware of his father's mare with Kamal upon  
her back,

And when he could spy the white of her eye, he made the  
pistol crack.

He has fired once, he has fired twice, but the whistling ball  
went wide.

'Ye shoot like a soldier,' Kamal said. 'Show now if ye  
can ride!'

It's up and over the Tongue of Jagai, as blown dust-devils  
go,

The dun he fled like a stag of ten, but the mare like a  
barren doe.

The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his head  
above,

But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as a maiden  
plays with a glove.

There was rock to the left and rock to the right, and low  
lean thorn between,  
And thrice he heard a breech-bolt snick tho' never a man  
was seen.



They have ridden the low moon out of the sky, their hoofs  
 drum up the dawn,  
 The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the mare like a  
 new-roused fawn.  
 The dun he fell at a water-course—in a woeful heap fell  
 he,  
 And Kamal has turned the red mare back, and pulled the  
 rider free.  
 He has knocked the pistol out of his hand—small room was  
 there to strive,  
 ‘’Twas only by favour of mine,’ quoth he, ‘ye rode so  
 long alive:  
 ‘There was not a rock for twenty mile, there was not a  
 clump of tree,  
 ‘But covered a man of my own men with his rifle cocked  
 on his knee.  
 ‘If I had raised my bridle-hand, as I have held it  
 low,  
 ‘The little jackals that flee so fast were feasting all in a  
 row.  
 ‘If I had bowed my head on my breast, as I have held it  
 high,  
 ‘The kite that whistles above us now were gorged till she  
 could not fly.’  
 Lightly answered the Colonel’s son: ‘Do good to bird and  
 beast,  
 ‘But count who come for the broken meats before thou  
 makest a feast.  
 ‘If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my  
 bones away,  
 ‘Belike the price of a jackal’s meal were more than a thief  
 could pay.  
 ‘They will feed their horse on the standing crop, their  
 men on the garnered grain.  
 ‘The thatch of the byres will serve their fires when all the  
 cattle are slain.

'But if thou thinkest the price be fair,—thy brethren wait  
 to sup,  
 'The hound is kin to the jackal-spawn,—howl, dog, and  
 call them up!  
 'And if thou thinkest the price be high, in steer and gear  
 and stack,  
 'Give me my father's mare again, and I'll fight my own  
 way back!'

Kamal has gripped him by the hand and set him upon his feet.

'No talk shall be of dogs,' said he, 'when wolf and grey  
 wolf meet.  
 'May I eat dirt if thou hast hurt of me in deed or  
 breath;  
 'What dam of lances brought thee forth to jest at the  
 dawn with Death?'

Lightly answered the Colonel's son: 'I hold by the blood  
 of my clan:

'Take up the mare for my father's gift—by God, she has  
 carried a man!'

The red mare ran to the Colonel's son, and nuzzled against his breast;

'We be two strong men,' said Kamal then, 'but she  
 loveth the younger best.  
 'So she shall go with a lifter's dower, my turquoise-  
 studded rein,  
 'My 'broidered saddle and saddle-cloth, and silver stir-  
 rups twain.'

The Colonel's son a pistol drew, and held it muzzle-  
 end,

'Ye have taken the one from a foe,' said he. 'Will ye  
 take the mate from a friend?'

'A gift for a gift,' said Kamal straight; 'a limb for the  
 risk of a limb.  
 'Thy father has sent his son to me, I'll send my son to  
 him!'

With that he whistled his only son, that dropped from a  
 mountain-crest—  
 He trod the ling like a buck in spring, and he looked like a  
 lance in rest.  
 ‘Now here is thy master,’ Kamal said, ‘who leads a troop  
 of the Guides,  
 ‘And thou must ride at his left side as shield on shoulder  
 rides.  
 ‘Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board and  
 bed,  
 ‘Thy life is his—thy fate it is to guard him with thy  
 head.  
 ‘So, thou must eat the White Queen’s meat, and all her  
 foes are thine,  
 ‘And thou must harry thy father’s hold for the peace of  
 the Border-line.  
 ‘And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way  
 to power—  
 ‘Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am hanged  
 in Peshawur!’

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there  
 they found no fault.  
 They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on  
 leavened bread and salt:  
 They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire  
 and fresh-cut sod,  
 On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and the  
 Wondrous Names of God.

The Colonel’s son he rides the mare and Kamal’s boy the  
 dun,  
 And two have come back to Fort Bukloh where there went  
 forth but one.

And when they drew to the Quarter-Guard, full twenty  
swords flew clear—  
There was not a man but carried his feud with the blood of  
the mountaineer.  
‘Ha’ done! ha’ done!’ said the Colonel’s son. ‘Put up  
the steel at your sides!  
‘Last night ye had struck at a Border thief—to-night ’tis a  
man of the Guides!’

*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain  
shall meet,  
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God’s great Judgment  
Seat ;  
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor  
Birth,  
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come  
from the ends of the earth!*

## GEHAZI

1915

**W**hence comest thou, Gehazi,  
So reverend to behold,  
In scarlet and in ermines  
And chain of Eng<sup>l</sup>and’s gold?  
‘From following after Naaman  
To tell him all is well,  
Whereby my zeal hath made me  
A Judge in Israel.’

Well done, well done, Gehazi!  
Stretch forth thy ready hand.  
Thou barely ’scaped from judgment,  
Take oath to judge the land



Unswayed by gift of money  
Or privy bribe, more base,  
Of knowledge which is profit  
In any market-place.

Search out and probe, Gehazi,  
As thou of all canst try,  
The truthful, well-weighed answer  
That tells the blacker lie—  
The loud, uneasy virtue,  
The anger feigned at will,  
To overbear a witness  
And make the Court keep still.

Take order now, Gehazi,  
That no man talk aside  
In secret with his judges  
The while his case is tried.  
Lest he should show them—reason  
To keep a matter hid,  
And subtly lead the questions  
Away from what he did.

Thou mirror of uprightness,  
What ails thee at thy vows?  
What means the risen whiteness  
Of the skin between thy brows?  
The boils that shine and burrow,  
The sores that slough and bleed—  
The leprosy of Naaman  
On thee and all thy seed?  
Stand up, stand up, Gehazi,  
Draw close thy robe and go.  
Gehazi, Judge in Israel,  
A leper white as snow!

## ET DONA FERENTES

1896

In extended observation of the ways and works of man,  
From the Four-mile Radius roughly to the Plains of  
Hindustan:

I have drunk with mixed assemblies, seen the racial ruction  
rise,  
And the men of half Creation damning half Creation's  
eyes.

I have watched them in their tantrums, all that pentecostal  
crew,  
French, Italian, Arab, Spaniard, Dutch and Greek, and  
Russ and Jew,  
Celt and savage, buff and ochre, cream and yellow, mauve  
and white,  
But it never really mattered till the English grew polite;  
Till the men with polished toppers, till the men in long  
frock-coats,  
Till the men who do not duel, till the men who war with  
votes,  
Till the breed that take their pleasures as Saint Lawrence  
took his grid,  
Began to 'beg your pardon' and—the knowing croupier  
hid.

Then the bandsmen with their fiddles, and the girls that  
bring the beer,  
Felt the psychological moment, left the lit Casino clear;  
But the uninstructed alien, from the Teuton to the Gaul,  
Was entrapped, once more, my country, by that suave,  
deceptive drawl.

. . . . .

As it was in ancient Suez or 'neath wilder, milder skies,  
I 'observe with apprehension' how the racial ructions  
rise;

And with keener apprehension, if I read the times aright,  
Hear the old Casino order: 'Watch your man, but be polite.

'Keep your temper. Never answer (*that* was why they  
spat and swore).

Don't hit first, but move together (there's no hurry) to the  
door.

Back to back, and facing outward while the linguist tells  
'em how—

“*Nous sommes allong ar notre batteau, nous ne voulong pas  
un row.*” ’

So the hard, pent rage ate inward, till some idiot went too  
far . . .

'Let 'em have it!' and they had it, and the same was  
merry war—

Fist, umbrella, cane, decanter, lamp and beer-mug, chair  
and boot—

Till behind the fleeing legions rose the long, hoarse yell for  
loot.

Then the oil-cloth with its numbers, like a banner fluttered  
free;

Then the grand piano cantered, on three castors, down the  
quay;

White, and breathing through their nostrils, silent, system-  
atic, swift—

They removed, effaced, abolished all that man could heave  
or lift.

Oh, my country, bless the training that from cot to castle  
runs—

The pitfall of the stranger but the bulwark of thy sons—

Measured speech and ordered action, sluggish soul and  
unperturbed,  
Till we wake our Island-Devil—nowise cool for being  
curbed!

When the heir of all the ages 'has the honour to remain,'  
When he will not hear an insult, though men make it ne'er  
so plain,  
When his lips are schooled to meekness, when his back is  
bowed to blows—  
Well the keen *aas-vogels* know it—well the waiting jackal  
knows.

Build on the flanks of Etna where the sullen smoke-puffs  
float—  
Or bathe in tropic waters where the lean fin dogs the boat—  
Cock the gun that is not loaded, cook the frozen dynamite—  
But oh, beware my Country, when my Country grows  
polite!

## THE HOLY WAR

1917

(*'For here lay the excellent wisdom of him that built Mansoul, that the walls could never be broken down nor hurt by the most mighty adverse potentate unless the townsmen gave consent thereto.'*—BUNYAN'S *Holy War*.)

*A* tinker out of Bedford,  
A vagrant oft in quod,  
A private under Fairfax,  
A minister of God—  
Two hundred years and thirty  
Ere Armageddon came  
His single hand portrayed it,  
And Bunyan was his name



He mapped for those who follow,  
The world in which we are—  
'This famous town of Mansoul'  
That takes the Holy War.  
Her true and traitor people,  
The Gates along her wall,  
From Eye Gate unto Feel Gate,  
John Bunyan showed them all.

All enemy divisions,  
Recruits of every class,  
And highly screened positions  
For flame or poison-gas;  
The craft that we call modern,  
The crimes that we call new,  
John Bunyan had 'em typed and filed  
In Sixteen Eighty-two.

Likewise the Lords of Looseness  
That hamper faith and works,  
The Perseverance-Doubters,  
And Present-Comfort shirks,  
With brittle intellectuals  
Who crack beneath a strain—  
John Bunyan met that helpful set  
In Charles the Second's reign

Emmanuel's vanguard dying  
For right and not for rights,  
My Lord Apollyon lying  
To the State-kept Stockholmites,  
The Pope, the swithering Neutrals,  
The Kaiser and his Gott—  
Their rôles, their goals, their naked souls—  
He knew and drew the lot.

Now he hath left his quarters,  
In Bunhill Fields to lie,  
The wisdom that he taught us  
Is proven prophecy—  
One watchword through our Armies,  
One answer from our Lands:—  
'No dealings with Diabolus  
As long as Mansoul stands!'

*A pedlar from a hovel,  
The lowest of the low—  
The Father of the Novel,  
Salvation's first Defoe—  
Eight blinded generations  
Ere Armageddon came,  
He showed us how to meet it,  
And Bunyan was his name!*

## FRANCE

1913

*Broke to every known mischance, lifted over all  
By the light sane joy of life, the buckler of the Gaul;  
Furious in luxury, merciless in toil,  
Terrible with strength that draws from her tireless soil;  
Strictest judge of her own worth, gentlest of man's mind,  
First to follow Truth and last to leave old Truths behind—  
France, beloved of every soul that loves its fellow-kind!*

Ere our birth (rememberest thou?) side by side we lay  
Fretting in the womb of Rome to begin our fray.  
Ere men knew our tongues apart, our one task was  
known—  
Each to mould the other's fate as he wrought his own.

To this end we stirred mankind till all Earth was ours,  
Till our world-end strifes begat wayside Thrones and  
Powers—

Puppets that we made or broke to bar the other's path—  
Necessary, outpost-folk, hirelings of our wrath.

To this end we stormed the seas, tack for tack, and burst  
Through the doorways of new worlds, doubtful which was  
first,

Hand on hilt (rememberest thou?) ready for the blow—  
Sure, whatever else we met, we should meet our foe.  
Spurred or balked at every stride by the other's strength,  
So we rode the ages down and every ocean's length!

Where did you refrain from us or we refrain from you?  
Ask the wave that has not watched war between us two!  
Others held us for a while, but with weaker charms,  
These we quitted at the call for each other's arms.

Eager toward the known delight, equally we strove—  
Each the other's mystery, terror, need, and love.  
To each other's open court with our proofs we came.  
Where could we find honour else, or men to test our claim?  
From each other's throat we wrenched—valour's last  
reward—

That extorted word of praise gasped 'twixt lunge and  
guard.

In each other's cup we poured mingled blood and tears,  
Brutal joys, unmeasured hopes, intolerable fears—  
All that soiled or salted life for a thousand years.  
Proved beyond the need of proof, matched in every clime,  
O Companion, we have lived greatly through all time!

Yoked in knowledge and remorse, now we come to rest,  
Laughing at old villainies that Time has turned to jest;  
Pardoning old necessities no pardon can efface—  
That undying sin we shared in Rouen market-place.

Now we watch the new years shape, wondering if they hold  
Fiercer lightnings in their heart than we launched of old.  
Now we hear new voices rise, question, boast or gird,  
As we raged (rememberest thou?) when our crowds were  
stirred.

Now we count new keels afloat, and new hosts on land,  
Massed like ours (rememberest thou?) when our strokes  
were planned.

We were schooled for dear life's sake, to know each other's  
blade.

What can Blood and Iron make more than we have made?  
We have learned by keenest use to know each other's mind.  
What shall Blood and Iron loose that we cannot bind?  
We who swept each other's coast, sacked each other's  
home,

Since the sword of Brennus clashed on the scales at Rome,  
Listen, count and close again, wheeling girth to girth,  
In the linked and steadfast guard set for peace on earth!

Broke to every known mischance, lifted over all  
By the light sane joy of life, the buckler of the Gaul;  
Furious in luxury, merciless in toil,  
Terrible with strength renewed from a tireless soil;  
Strictest judge of her own worth, gentlest of man's mind,  
First to face the Truth and last to leave old Truths behind—  
France, beloved of every soul that loves or serves its kind!

## THE BELL BUOY

1896

They christened my brother of old—  
And a saintly name he bears—  
They gave him his place to hold  
At the head of the belfry-stairs,



Where the minster-towers stand  
And the breeding kestrels cry.

Would I change with my brother a league inland?  
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

In the flush of the hot June prime,  
O'er sleek flood-tides afire,  
I hear him hurry the chime  
To the bidding of checked Desire;  
Till the sweated ringers tire  
And the wild bob-majors die.

Could I wait for my turn in the godly choir?  
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

When the smoking scud is blown—  
When the greasy wind-rack lowers—  
Apart and at peace and alone,  
He counts the changeless hours.

He wars with darkling Powers  
(I war with a darkling sea);

Would he stoop to my work in the gusty mirk?  
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not he!

There was never a priest to pray,  
There was never a hand to toll,  
When they made me guard of the bay,  
And moored me over the shoal.

I rock, I reel, and I roll—  
My four great hammers ply—

Could I speak or be still at the Church's will?  
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

The landward marks have failed,  
The fog-bank glides unguessed,  
The seaward lights are veiled,

The spent deep feigns her rest :  
But my ear is laid to her breast,  
I lift to the swell—I cry!  
Could I wait in sloth on the Church's oath?  
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

At the careless end of night  
I thrill to the nearing screw ;  
I turn in the clearing light  
And I call to the drowsy crew ;  
And the mud boils foul and blue  
As the blind bow backs away.  
Will they give me their thanks if they clear the banks?  
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not they!

The beach-pools cake and skim,  
The bursting spray-heads freeze,  
I gather on crown and rim  
The grey, grained ice of the seas,  
Where, sheathed from bitt to trees,  
The plunging colliers lie.  
Would I barter my place for the Church's grace?  
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

Through the blur of the whirling snow,  
Or the black of the inky sleet,  
The lanterns gather and grow,  
And I look for the homeward fleet.  
Rattle of block and sheet—  
'Ready about—stand by!'  
Shall I ask them a fee ere they fetch the quay?  
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

I dip and I surge and I swing  
In the rip of the racing tide,  
By the gates of doom I sing,

On the horns of death I ride.  
A ship-length overside,  
Between the course and the sand  
Fretted and bound I bide  
Peril whereof I cry.  
Would I change with my brother a league inland?  
(*Shoal! 'Ware shoal!*) Not I!

## MESOPOTAMIA

1917

They shall not return to us, the resolute, the young,  
The eager and whole-hearted whom we gave:  
But the men who left them thriftily to die in their own  
dung,  
Shall they come with years and honour to the grave?

They shall not return to us, the strong men coldly slain  
In sight of help denied from day to day:  
But the men who edged their agonies and chid them in  
their pain,  
Are they too strong and wise to put away?

Our dead shall not return to us while Day and Night  
divide—  
Never while the bars of sunset hold.  
But the idle-minded overlings who quibbled while they  
died,  
Shall they thrust for high employments as of old?

Shall we only threaten and be angry for an hour?  
When the storm is ended shall we find  
How softly but how swiftly they have sidled back to power  
By the favour and contrivance of their kind?

Even while they soothe us, while they promise large  
amends,

Even while they make a show of fear,  
Do they call upon their debtors, and take counsel with  
their friends,

To confirm and re-establish each career?

Their lives cannot repay us—their death could not undo—

The shame that they have laid upon our race.

But the slothfulness that wasted and the arrogance that  
slew,

Shall we leave it unabated in its place?

## THE ISLANDERS

1902

*No doubt but ye are the People—your throne is above  
the King's.*

*Whoso speaks in your presence must say acceptable things:  
Bowing the head in worship, bending the knee in fear—  
Bringing the word well smoothen—such as a King should  
hear.*

Fenced by your careful fathers, ringed by your leaden seas,  
Long did ye wake in quiet and long lie down at ease;  
Till ye said of Strife, 'What is it?' of the Sword, 'It is  
far from our ken';

Till ye made a sport of your shrunken hosts and a toy of  
your armed men.

Ye stopped your ears to the warning—ye would neither  
look nor heed—

Ye set your leisure before their toil and your lusts above  
their need.



Because of your witless learning and your beasts of warren  
and chase,  
Ye grudged your sons to their service and your fields for  
their camping-place.  
Ye forced them glean in the highways the straw for the  
bricks they brought;  
Ye forced them follow in byways the craft that ye never  
taught.  
Ye hampered and hindered and crippled; ye thrust out of  
sight and away  
Those that would serve you for honour and those that  
served you for pay.  
Then were the judgments loosened; then was your shame  
revealed,  
At the hands of a little people, few but apt in the field.  
Yet ye were saved by a remnant (and your land's long-  
suffering star),  
When your strong men cheered in their millions while your  
striplings went to the war.  
Sons of the sheltered city—unmade, unhandled, unmeet—  
Ye pushed them raw to the battle as ye picked them raw  
from the street.  
And what did ye look they should compass? Warcraft  
learned in a breath,  
Knowledge unto occasion at the first far view of Death?  
So? And ye train your horses and the dogs ye feed and prize?  
How are the beasts more worthy than the souls, your  
sacrifice?  
But ye said, 'Their valour shall show them'; but ye said,  
'The end is close.'  
And ye sent them comfits and pictures to help them harry  
your foes:  
And ye vaunted your fathomless power, and ye flaunted  
your iron pride,  
Ere—ye fawned on the Younger Nations for the men who  
could shoot and ride!

Then ye returned to your trinkets ; then ye contented your  
     souls  
 With the flannelled fools at the wicket or the muddied oafs  
     at the goals.  
 Given to strong delusion, wholly believing a lie,  
 Ye saw that the land lay fenceless, and ye let the months  
     go by  
 Waiting some easy wonder, hoping some saving sign—  
 Idle—openly idle—in the lee of the forespent Line.  
 Idle—except for your boasting—and what is your boast-  
     ing worth  
 If ye grudge a year of service to the lordliest life on  
     earth?  
 Ancient, effortless, ordered, cycle on cycle set,  
 Life so long untroubled, that ye who inherit forget  
 It was not made with the mountains, it is not one with the  
     deep.  
 Men, not gods, devised it. Men, not gods, must keep.  
 Men, not children, servants, or kinsfolk called from afar,  
 But each man born in the Island broke to the matter of  
     war.  
 Soberly and by custom taken and trained for the same,  
 Each man born in the Island entered at youth to the  
     game—  
 As it were almost cricket, not to be mastered in haste,  
 But after trial and labour, by temperance, living chaste.  
 As it were almost cricket—as it were even your play,  
 Weighed and pondered and worshipped, and practised day  
     and day.  
 So ye shall bide sure-guarded when the restless lightnings  
     wake  
 In the womb of the blotting war-cloud, and the pallid  
     nations quake.  
 So, at the haggard trumpets, instant your soul shall leap  
 Forthright, accoutred, accepting—alert from the wells of  
     sleep.

So at the threat ye shall summon—so at the need ye shall  
 send  
 Men, not children or servants, tempered and taught to the  
 end;  
 Cleansed of servile panic, slow to dread or despise,  
 Humble because of knowledge, mighty by sacrifice. . . .  
 But ye say, 'It will mar our comfort.' Ye say, 'It will  
 minish our trade.'  
 Do ye wait for the spattered shrapnel ere ye learn how a  
 gun is laid?  
 For the low, red glare to southward when the raided coast-  
 towns burn?  
 (Light ye shall have on that lesson, but little time to learn.)  
 Will ye pitch some white pavilion, and lustily even the  
 odds,  
 With nets and hoops and mallets, with rackets and bats  
 and rods?  
 Will the rabbit war with your foemen—the red deer horn  
 them for hire?  
 Your kept cock-pheasant keep you?—he is master of  
 many a shire.  
 Arid, aloof, incurious, unthinking, unthanking, gelt,  
 Will ye loose your schools to flout them till their brow-  
 beat columns melt?  
 Will ye pray them or preach them, or print them, or ballot  
 them back from your shore?  
 Will your workmen issue a mandate to bid them strike no  
 more?  
 Will ye rise and dethrone your rulers? (Because ye were  
 idle both?  
 Pride by Insolence chastened? Indolence purged by  
 Sloth?)  
 No doubt but ye are the People; who shall make you  
 afraid?  
 Also your gods are many; no doubt but your gods shall  
 aid.

Idols of greasy altars built for the body's ease;  
Proud little brazen Baals and talking fetishes;  
Teraphs of sept and party and wise wood-pavement  
gods—

*These* shall come down to the battle and snatch you from  
under the rods?

From the gusty, flickering gun-roll with viewless salvoes  
rent,

And the pitted hail of the bullets that tell not whence they  
were sent.

When ye are ringed as with iron, when ye are scourged as  
with whips,

When the meat is yet in your belly, and the boast is yet on  
your lips;

When ye go forth at morning and the noon beholds you  
broke,

Ere ye lie down at even, your remnant, under the yoke?

*No doubt but ye are the People—absolute, strong, and  
wise;*

*Whatever your heart has desired ye have not withheld from  
your eyes.*

*On your own heads, in your own hands, the sin and the  
saving lies!*

## THE VETERANS

*(Written for the gathering of survivors of the Indian Mutiny,  
Albert Hall, 1907)*

To-day, across our fathers' graves,  
The astonished years reveal  
The remnants of that desperate host  
Which cleansed our East with steel.



Hail and farewell! We greet you here,  
With tears that none will scorn—  
O Keepers of the House of old,  
Or ever we were born!

One service more we dare to ask—  
Pray for us, heroes, pray,  
That when Fate lays on us our task  
We do not shame the Day!

## THE DYKES

1902

**W**e have no heart for the fishing—we have no hand for  
the oar—  
All that our fathers taught us of old pleases us now no  
more.

All that our own hearts bid us believe we doubt where we  
do not deny—

There is no proof in the bread we eat nor rest in the toil  
we ply.

Look you, our foreshore stretches far through sea-gate,  
dyke, and groin—

Made land all, that our fathers made, where the flats and  
the fairway join.

They forced the sea a sea-league back. They died, and  
their work stood fast.

We were born to peace in the lee of the dykes, but the time  
of our peace is past.

Far off, the full tide clambers and slips, mouthing and  
testing all,

Nipping the flanks of the water-gates, baying along the  
wall;

Turning the shingle, returning the shingle, changing the  
set of the sand . . .

We are too far from the beach, men say, to know how the  
outworks stand.

So we come down, uneasy, to look; uneasily pacing the  
beach.

These are the dykes our fathers made: we have never  
known a breach.

Time and again has the gale blown by and we were not  
afraid;

Now we come only to look at the dykes—at the dykes our  
fathers made.

O'er the marsh where the homesteads cower apart the  
harried sunlight flies,

Shifts and considers, wanes and recovers, scatters and  
sickens and dies—

An evil ember bedded in ash—a spark blown west by the  
wind . . .

We are surrendered to night and the sea—the gale and the  
tide behind!

At the bridge of the lower saltings the cattle gather and  
blare,

Roused by the feet of running men, dazed by the lantern-  
glare.

Unbar and let them away for their lives—the levels drown  
as they stand,

Where the flood-wash forces the sluices aback and the  
ditches deliver inland.

Ninefold deep to the top of the dykes the galloping  
breakers stride,

And their overcarried spray is a sea—a sea on the land-  
ward side.

Coming, like stallions they paw with their hooves, going  
they snatch with their teeth,  
Till the bents and the furze and the sand are dragged out,  
and the old-time hurdles beneath.

Bid men gather fuel for fire, the tar, the oil, and the tow—  
Flame we shall need, not smoke, in the dark if the riddled  
sea-banks go.

Bid the ringers watch in the tower (who knows how the  
dawn shall prove?)

Each with his rope between his feet and the trembling bells  
above.

Now we can only wait till the day, wait and apportion our  
shame.

These are the dykes our fathers left, but we would not look  
to the same.

Time and again were we warned of the dykes, time and  
again we delayed:

Now, it may fall, we have slain our sons, as our fathers we  
have betrayed.

. . . . .

Walking along the wreck of the dykes, watching the work  
of the seas!

These were the dykes our fathers made to our great profit  
and ease.

But the peace is gone and the profit is gone, with the old  
sure days withdrawn . . .

That our own houses show as strange when we come back  
in the dawn!

# THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

1899

*(The United States and the Philippine Islands)*

Take up the White Man's burden—  
Send forth the best ye breed—  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
To wait in heavy harness  
On fluttered folk and wild—  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half devil and half child.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
In patience to abide,  
To veil the threat of terror  
And check the show of pride;  
By open speech and simple,  
An hundred times made plain,  
To seek another's profit,  
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
The savage wars of peace—  
Fill full the mouth of Famine  
And bid the sickness cease;  
And when your goal is nearest  
The end for others sought,  
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly  
Bring all your hope to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
No tawdry rule of kings,  
But toil of serf and sweeper—  
The tale of common things.



The ports ye shall not enter,  
The roads ye shall not tread,  
Go make them with your living,  
And mark them with your dead!

Take up the White Man's burden—  
And reap his old reward:  
The blame of those ye better,  
The hate of those ye guard—  
The cry of hosts ye humour  
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—  
'Why brought ye us from bondage,  
'Our loved Egyptian night?'

Take up the White Man's burden—  
Ye dare not stoop to less—  
Nor call too loud on Freedom  
To cloak your weariness;  
By all ye cry or whisper,  
By all ye leave or do,  
The silent, sullen peoples  
Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
Have done with childish days—  
The lightly proffered laurel,  
The easy, ungrudged praise.  
Comes now, to search your manhood  
Through all the thankless years,  
Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom.  
The judgment of your peers!

## HYMN BEFORE ACTION

1896

**T**he earth is full of anger,  
The seas are dark with wrath,  
The Nations in their harness  
Go up against our path :  
Ere yet we loose the legions  
Ere yet we draw the blade,  
Jehovah of the Thunders,  
Lord God of Battles, aid!  
High lust and froward bearing,  
Proud heart, rebellious brow—  
Deaf ear and soul uncaring,  
We seek Thy mercy now!  
The sinner that forswore Thee,  
The fool that passed Thee by,  
Our times are known before Thee—  
Lord, grant us strength to die!  
For those who kneel beside us  
At altars not Thine own,  
Who lack the lights that guide us,  
Lord, let their faith atone!  
If wrong we did to call them,  
By honour bound they came;  
Let not Thy Wrath befall them,  
But deal to us the blame.  
From panic, pride, and terror,  
Revenge that knows no rein—  
Light haste and lawless error,  
Protect us yet again.  
Clope Thou our undeserving,  
Make firm the shuddering breath,  
In silence and unswerving  
To taste Thy lesser death.

Ah, Mary pierced with sorrow,  
Remember, reach and save  
The soul that comes to-morrow  
Before the God that gave!  
Since each was born of woman,  
For each at utter need—  
True comrade and true foeman—  
Madonna, intercede!

E'en now their vanguard gathers,  
E'en now we face the fray—  
As Thou didst help our fathers,  
Help Thou our host to-day.  
Fulfilled of signs and wonders,  
In life, in death made clear—  
Jehovah of the Thunders,  
Lord God of Battles, hear!

## RECESSIONAL

1897

God of our fathers, known of old,  
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,  
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold  
Dominion over palm and pine—  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;  
The Captains and the Kings depart:  
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,  
An humble and a contrite heart.

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;  
On dune and headland sinks the fire:  
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday  
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!  
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose  
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,  
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,  
Or lesser breeds without the Law—  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust  
In reeking tube and iron shard,  
All valiant dust that builds on dust,  
And guarding, calls not Thee to guard.  
For frantic boast and foolish word—  
Thy mercy on Thy People, Lord!

‘FOR ALL WE HAVE AND ARE’

1914

For all we have and are,  
For all our children's fate,  
Stand up and take the war.  
The Hun is at the gate!  
Our world has passed away,  
In wantonness o'erthrown.  
There is nothing left to-day  
But steel and fire and stone!



Though all we knew depart,  
The old Commandments stand :—  
'In courage keep your heart,  
In strength lift up your hand.'

Once more we hear the word  
That sickened earth of old :—  
'No law except the Sword  
Unsheathed and uncontrolled.'  
Once more it knits mankind,  
Once more the nations go  
To meet and break and bind  
A crazed and driven foe.

Comfort, content, delight,  
The ages' slow-bought gain,  
They shrivelled in a night.  
Only ourselves remain  
To face the naked days  
In silent fortitude,  
Through perils and dismays  
Renewed and re-renewed.

Though all we made depart,  
The old Commandments stand :—  
'In patience keep your heart,  
In strength lift up your hand.'

No easy hope or lies  
Shall bring us to our goal,  
But iron sacrifice  
Of body, will, and soul.  
There is but one task for all—  
One life for each to give.  
What stands if Freedom fall?  
Who dies if England live?

## THE BENEFACTORS

*Ah! What avails the classic bent  
And what the cultured word,  
Against the undoctored incident  
That actually occurred?*

*And what is Art whereto we press  
Through paint and prose and rhyme—  
When Nature in her nakedness  
Defeats us every time?*

It is not learning, grace nor gear,  
Nor easy meat and drink,  
But bitter pinch of pain and fear  
That makes creation think.

When in this world's unpleasing youth  
Our godlike race began,  
The longest arm, the sharpest tooth,  
Gave man control of man;

Till, bruised and bitten to the bone  
And taught by pain and fear,  
He learned to deal the far-off stone,  
And poke the long, safe spear.

So tooth and nail were obsolete  
As means against a foe,  
Till, bored by uniform defeat,  
Some genius built the bow.

Then stone and javelin proved as vain  
As old-time tooth and nail;  
Till, spurred anew by fear and pain,  
Man fashioned coats of mail.

Then was there safety for the rich  
And danger for the poor,  
Till someone mixed a powder which  
Redressed the scale once more.

Helmet and armour disappeared  
With sword and bow and pike,  
And, when the smoke of battle cleared,  
All men were armed alike. . . .

And when ten million such were slain  
To please one crazy king,  
Man, schooled in bulk by fear and pain,  
Grew weary of the thing;

And, at the very hour designed  
To enslave him past recall,  
His tooth-stone-arrow-gun-shy mind  
Turned and abolished all.

*All Power, each Tyrant, every Mob  
Whose head has grown too large,  
Ends by destroying its own job  
And works its own discharge;*

*And Man, whose mere necessities  
Move all things from his path,  
Trembles meanwhile at their decrees,  
And deprecates their wrath!*

## THE CRAFTSMAN

Once, after long-drawn revel at The Mermaid,  
He to the overbearing Boanerges  
Jonson, uttered (if half of it were liquor,  
Blessed be the vintage!)

Saying how, at an alehouse under Cotswold,  
He had made sure of his very Cleopatra  
Drunk with enormous, salvation-contemning  
Love for a tinker.

How, while he hid from Sir Thomas's keepers,  
Crouched in a ditch and drenched by the midnight  
Dews, he had listened to gipsy Juliet  
Rail at the dawning.

How at Bankside, a boy drowning kittens  
Winced at the business; whereupon his sister—  
Lady Macbeth aged seven—thrust 'em under,  
Sombrely scornful.

How on a Sabbath, hushed and compassionate—  
She being known since her birth to the townsfolk—  
Stratford dredged and delivered from Avon  
Dripping Ophelia.

So, with a thin third finger marrying  
Drop to wine-drop domed on the table,  
Shakespeare opened his heart till the sunrise  
Entered to hear him.

London waked and he, imperturbable,  
Passed from waking to hurry after shadows . . .  
Busied upon shows of no earthly importance?  
Yes, but he knew it!

SAMUEL PEPYS

1933

Like as the Oak whose roots descend  
Through earth and stillness seeking food  
Most apt to furnish in the end  
That dense, indomitable wood

Which, felled, may arm a seaward flank  
Of Ostia's mole or—bent to frame  
The beaked Liburnian's triple bank—  
Carry afar the Roman name;

But which, a tree, the season moves  
Through gentler Gods than Wind or Tide,  
Delightedly to harbour doves,  
Or take some clasping vine for bride;

So this man—prescient to ensure  
(Since even now his orders hold)  
A little State might ride secure  
At sea from foes her sloth made bold,—

Turned in his midmost harried round,  
As Venus drove or Liber led,  
And snatched from any shrine he found  
The Stolen Draught, the Secret Bread.

Nor these alone. His life betrayed  
No gust unslaked, no pleasure missed.  
He called the obedient Nine to aid  
The varied chase. And Clio kissed;

Bidding him write each sordid love,  
Shame, panic, stratagem, and lie  
In full, that sinners undiscovered,  
like ourselves, might say:—'Tis I!



‘WHEN ‘OMER SMOTE ‘IS BLOOMIN’  
LYRE’

*(Introduction to the Barrack-Room Ballads in  
‘The Seven Seas’)*

When ‘Omer smote ‘is bloomin’ lyre,  
He’d ‘eard men sing by land an’ sea;  
An’ what he thought ‘e might require,  
‘E went an’ took—the same as me!

The market-girls an’ fishermen,  
The shepherds an’ the sailors, too,  
They ‘eard old songs turn up again,  
But kep’ it quiet—same as you!

They knew ‘e stole; ‘e knew they knowed.  
They didn’t tell, nor make a fuss,  
But winked at ‘Omer down the road,  
An’ ‘e winked back—the same as us!

TOMLINSON

1891

Now Tomlinson gave up the ghost at his house in  
Berkeley Square,  
And a Spirit came to his bedside and gripped him by the  
hair—

A Spirit gripped him by the hair and carried him far away,  
Till he heard as the roar of a rain-fed ford the roar of the  
Milky Way:

Till he heard the roar of the Milky Way die down and  
drone and cease,

And they came to the Gate within the Wall where Peter  
holds the keys.

‘Stand up, stand up now, Tomlinson, and answer loud and high  
‘The good that ye did for the sake of men or ever ye came to die—  
‘The good that ye did for the sake of men on little Earth so lone!’  
And the naked soul of Tomlinson grew white as a rain-washed bone.  
‘O I have a friend on Earth,’ he said, ‘that was my priest and guide,  
‘And well would he answer all for me if he were at my side.’  
—‘For that ye strove in neighbour-love it shall be written fair,  
‘But now ye wait at Heaven’s Gate and not in Berkeley Square:  
‘Though we called your friend from his bed this night, he could not speak for you,  
‘For the race is run by one and one and never by two and two.’  
Then Tomlinson looked up and down, and little gain was there,  
For the naked stars grinned overhead, and he saw that his soul was bare.  
The Wind that blows between the Worlds, it cut him like a knife,  
And Tomlinson took up the tale and spoke of his good in life.  
‘O this I have read in a book,’ he said, ‘and that was told to me,  
‘And this I have thought that another man thought of a Prince in Muscovy.’  
The good souls flocked like homing doves and bade him clear the path,  
And Peter twirled the jangling Keys in weariness and wrath.

'Ye have read, ye have heard, ye have thought,' he said,  
 'and the tale is yet to run :  
 'By the worth of the body that once ye had, give answer—  
 what ha' ye done?'

Then Tomlinson looked back and forth, and little good it  
 bore,  
 For the darkness stayed at his shoulder-blade and Heaven's  
 Gate before :—

'O this I have felt, and this I have guessed, and this I have  
 heard men say,  
 'And this they wrote that another man wrote of a carl in  
 Norrøway.'

'Ye have read, ye have felt, ye have guessed, good lack!  
 Ye have hampered Heaven's Gate;  
 'There's little room between the stars in idleness to prate!  
 'For none may reach by hired speech of neighbour, priest  
 and kin  
 'Through borrowed deed to God's good meed that lies so  
 fair within ;  
 'Get hence, get hence to the Lord of Wrong, for the doom  
 has yet to run,  
 'And . . . the faith that ye share with Berkeley Square  
 uphold you, Tomlinson!'

The Spirit gripped him by the hair, and sun by sun they  
 fell  
 Till they came to the belt of Naughty Stars that rim the  
 mouth of Hell.

The first are red with pride and wrath, the next are white  
 with pain,  
 But the third are black with clinkered sin that cannot burn  
 again.

They may hold their path, they may leave their path, with  
 never a soul to mark :  
 They may burn or freeze, but they must not cease in the  
 Scorn of the Outer Dark.

The Wind that blows between the Worlds, it nipped him  
 to the bone,  
 And he yearned to the flare of Hell-gate there as the light  
 of his own hearth-stone.  
 The Devil he sat behind the bars, where the desperate  
 legions drew,  
 But he caught the hasting Tomlinson and would not let  
 him through.  
 'Wot ye the price of good pit-coal that I must pay?' said  
 he,  
 'That ye rank yoursel' so fit for Hell and ask no leave of  
 me?  
 'I am all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that ye should give me  
 scorn,  
 'For I strove with God for your First Father the day that  
 he was born.  
 'Sit down, sit down upon the slag, and answer loud and  
 high  
 'The harm that ye did to the Sons of Men or ever you came  
 to die.'  
 And Tomlinson looked up and up, and saw against the  
 night  
 The belly of a tortured star blood-red in Hell-Mouth  
 light;  
 And Tomlinson looked down and down, and saw beneath  
 his feet  
 The frontlet of a tortured star milk-white in Hell-Mouth  
 heat.  
 'O I had a love on earth,' said he, 'that kissed me to my  
 fall;  
 'And if ye would call my love to me I know she would  
 answer all.'  
 —'All that ye did in love forbid it shall be written  
 fair,  
 'But now ye wait at Hell-Mouth Gate and not in Berkeley  
 Square;



'Though we whistled your love from her bed to-night, I  
 trow she would not run,  
 'For the sin ye do by two and two ye must pay for one by  
 one!'  
 The Wind that blows between the Worlds, it cut him like a  
 knife,  
 And Tomlinson took up the tale and spoke of his sins in  
 life:—  
 'Once I ha' laughed at the power of Love and twice at the  
 grip of the Grave,  
 'And thrice I ha' patted my God on the head that men  
 might call me brave.'  
 The Devil he blew on a brandered soul and set it aside to  
 cool:—  
 'Do ye think I would waste my good pit-coal on the hide  
 of a brain-sick fool?  
 'I see no worth in the hobnailed mirth or the jolthead jest  
 ye did  
 'That I should waken my gentlemen that are sleeping three  
 on a grid.'  
 Then Tomlinson looked back and forth, and there was  
 little grace,  
 For Hell-Gate filled the houseless soul with the Fear of  
 Naked Space.  
 'Nay, this I ha' heard,' quo' Tomlinson, 'and this was  
 noised abroad,  
 'And this I ha' got from a Belgian book on the word of a  
 dead French lord.'  
 —'Ye ha' heard, ye ha' read, ye ha' got, good lack! and  
 the tale begins afresh—  
 'Have ye sinned one sin for the pride o' the eye or the  
 sinful lust of the flesh?'  
 Then Tomlinson he gripped the bars and yammered, 'Let  
 me in—  
 'For I mind that I borrowed my neighbour's wife to sin  
 the deadly sin.'



The Devil he grinned behind the bars, and banked the fires  
high :

‘Did ye read of that sin in a book?’ said he ; and Tomlin-  
son said, ‘Ay!’

The Devil he blew upon his nails, and the little devils  
ran,

And he said : ‘Go husk this whimpering thief that comes  
in the guise of a man :

‘Winnow him out ’twixt star and star, and sieve his proper  
worth :

‘There’s sore decline in Adam’s line if this be spawn of  
Earth.’

Empusa’s crew, so naked-new they may not face the  
fire,

But weep that they bin too small to sin to the height of  
their desire,

Over the coal they chased the Soul, and racked it all  
abroad,

As children rifle a caddis-case or the raven’s foolish  
hoard.

And back they came with the tattered Thing, as children  
after play,

And they said : ‘The soul that he got from God he has  
bartered clean away.

‘We have threshed a stook of print and book, and win-  
nowed a chattering wind,

‘And many a soul wherefrom he stole, but his we cannot  
find.

‘We have handled him, we have dandled him, we have  
seared him to the bone,

‘And, Sire, if tooth and nail show truth he has no soul of  
his own.’

The Devil he bowed his head on his breast and rumbled  
deep and low :—

‘I’m all o’er-sib to Adam’s breed that I should bid him  
go.

‘Yet close we lie, and deep we lie, and if I gave him  
 place,  
 ‘My gentlemen that are so proud would flout me to my  
 face;  
 ‘They’d call my house a common stews and me a careless  
 host,  
 ‘And—I would not anger my gentlemen for the sake of a  
 shiftless ghost.’  
 The Devil he looked at the mangled Soul that prayed to  
 feel the flame,  
 And he thought of Holy Charity, but he thought of his own  
 good name:—  
 ‘Now ye could haste my coal to waste, and sit ye down to  
 fry.  
 ‘Did ye think of that theft for yourself?’ said he; and  
 Tomlinson said, ‘Ay!’  
 The Devil he blew an outward breath, for his heart was  
 free from care:—  
 ‘Ye have scarce the soul of a louse,’ he said, ‘but the roots  
 of sin are there,  
 ‘And for that sin should ye come in were I the lord  
 alone,  
 ‘But sinful pride has rule inside—ay, mightier than my  
 own.  
 ‘Honour and Wit, fore-damned they sit, to each his Priest  
 and Whore;  
 ‘Nay, scarce I dare myself go there, and you they’d torture  
 sore.  
 ‘Ye are neither spirit nor spirk,’ he said; ‘ye are neither  
 book nor brute—  
 ‘Go, get ye back to the flesh again for the sake of Man’s  
 repute.  
 ‘I’m all o’er-sib to Adam’s breed that I should mock your  
 pain,  
 ‘But look that ye win to worthier sin ere ye come back  
 again.

'Get hence, the hearse is at your door—the grim black  
 stallions wait—  
 'They bear your clay to place to-day. Speed, lest ye come  
 too late!  
 'Go back to Earth with a lip unsealed—go back with an  
 open eye,  
 'And carry my word to the Sons of Men or ever ye come  
 to die:  
 'That the sin they do by two and two they must pay for  
 one by one,  
 'And . . . the God that you took from a printed book  
 be with you, Tomlinson!'

## THE LAST RHYME OF TRUE THOMAS

1893

**T**he King has called for priest and cup,  
 The King has taken spur and blade  
 To dub True Thomas a belted knight,  
 And all for the sake of the songs he made.

They have sought him high, they have sought  
 him low,  
 They have sought him over down and lea.  
 They have found him by the milk-white thorn  
 That guards the Gates of Faerie.

*'Twas bent beneath and blue above :*  
*Their eyes were held that they might not see*  
*The kine that grazed beneath the knowes,*  
*Oh, they were the Queens of Faerie!*

‘Now cease your song,’ the King he said,  
‘Oh, cease your song and get you dight  
‘To vow your vow and watch your arms,  
‘For I will dub you a belted knight.

‘For I will give you a horse o’ pride,  
‘Wi’ blazon and spur and page and squire;  
‘Wi’ keep and tail and seizin and law,  
‘And land to hold at your desire.’

True Thomas smiled above his harp,  
And turned his face to the naked sky,  
Where, blown before the wastrel wind,  
The thistle-down she floated by.

‘I ha’ vowed my vow in another place,  
‘And bitter oath it was on me.  
‘I ha’ watched my arms the lee-long night,  
‘Where five-score fighting men would flee.

‘My lance is tipped o’ the hammered flame,  
‘My shield is beat o’ the moonlight cold;  
‘And I won my spurs in the Middle World,  
‘A thousand fathom beneath the mould.

‘And what should I make wi’ a horse o’ pride,  
‘And what should I make wi’ a sword so brown,  
‘But spill the rings of the Gentle Folk  
‘And flyte my kin in the Fairy Town?

‘And what should I make wi’ blazon and belt,  
‘Wi’ keep and tail and seizin and fee,  
‘And what should I do wi’ page and squire  
‘That am a king in my own countrie?

‘For I send east and I send west,  
‘And I send far as my will may flee,  
‘By dawn and dusk and the drinking rain,  
‘And syne my Sendings return to me.

‘They come wi’ news of the groanin’ earth,  
‘They come wi’ news of the roarin’ sea.  
‘Wi’ word of Spirit and Ghost and Flesh,  
‘And man, that’s mazed among the three.’

The King he bit his nether lip,  
And smote his hand upon his knee:  
‘By the faith of my soul, True Thomas,’ he said,  
‘Ye waste no wit in courtesie!

‘As I desire, unto my pride,  
‘Can I make Earls by three and three,  
‘To run before and ride behind  
‘And serve the sons o’ my body.’

‘And what care I for your row-foot earls,  
‘Or all the sons o’ your body?  
‘Before they win to the Pride o’ Name,  
‘I trow they all ask leave o’ me.

‘For I make Honour wi’ muckle mouth,  
‘As I make Shame wi’ mincing feet,  
‘To sing wi’ the priests at the market-cross,  
‘Or run wi’ the dogs in the naked street.

‘And some they give me the good red gold,  
‘And some they give me the white money,  
‘And some they give me a clout o’ meal,  
‘For they be people of low degree.



‘And the song I sing for the counted gold  
‘The same I sing for the white money,  
‘But best I sing for the clout o’ meal,  
‘That simple people given me.’

The King cast down a silver groat,  
A silver groat o’ Scots money,  
‘If I come wi’ a poor man’s dole,’ he said,  
‘True Thomas, will ye harp to me?’

‘Whenas I harp to the children small,  
‘They press me close on either hand.  
‘And who are you,’ True Thomas said,  
‘That you should ride while they must stand?’

‘Light down, light down from your horse o’ pride.  
‘I trow ye talk too loud and hie,  
‘And I will make you a triple word,  
‘And syne, if ye dare, ye shall ’noble me.’

He has lighted down from his horse o’ pride,  
And set his back against a stone.  
‘Now guard you well,’ True Thomas said,  
‘Ere I rax your heart from your breast-bone!’

True Thomas played upon his harp,  
The fairy harp that couldna lee,  
And the first least word the proud King heard,  
It harpit the salt tear out o’ his e’e.

‘Oh, I see the love that I lost long syne,  
‘I touch the hope that I may not see,  
‘And all that I did of hidden shame,  
‘Like little snakes they hiss at me.

'The sun is lost at noon.—at noon!  
'The dread of doom has grippit me.  
'True Thomas, hide me under your cloak,  
'God wot, I'm little fit to dee!'

*'Twas bent beneath and blue above—  
'Twas open field and running flood—  
Where, hot on heath and dyke and wall,  
The high sun warmed the adder's brood.*

'Lie down, lie down,' True Thomas said.  
'The God shall judge when all is done,  
'But I will bring you a better word  
'And lift the cloud that I laid on.'

True Thomas played upon his harp,  
That birlled and brattled to his hand,  
And the next least word True Thomas made  
It garred the King take horse and brand.

'Oh, I hear the tread o' the fighting-men,  
'I see the sun on splent and spear.  
'I mark the arrow outhen the fern  
'That flies so low and sings so clear!

'Advance my standards to that war,  
'And bid my good knights prick and ride  
'The gled shall watch as fierce a fight  
'As e'er was fought on the Border-side!'

*'Twas bent beneath and blue above,  
'Twas nodding grass and naked sky,  
Where, ringing up the wastrel wind,  
The eyass stooped upon the pye.*

True Thomas sighed above his harp,  
And turned the song on the midmost string;  
And the last least word True Thomas made,  
He harpit his dead youth back to the King.

‘Now I am prince, and I do well  
‘To love my love withouten fear;  
‘To walk with man in fellowship,  
‘And breathe my horse behind the deer.

‘My hounds they bay unto the death,  
‘The buck has couched beyond the burn,  
‘My love she waits at her window  
‘To wash my hands when I return.

‘For that I live am I content  
‘(Oh! I have seen my true love’s eyes)  
‘To stand with Adam in Eden-glade,  
‘And run in the woods o’ Paradise!’

*’Twas naked sky and nodding grass,  
’Twas running flood and wastrel wind,  
Where, checked against the open pass,  
The red deer turned to wait the hind.*

True Thomas laid his harp away,  
And louted low at the saddle-side;  
He has taken stirrup and hauden rein,  
And set the King on his horse o’ pride.

‘Sleep ye or wake,’ True Thomas said,  
‘That sit so still, that muse so long?  
‘Sleep ye or wake?—till the Latter Sleep  
‘I trow ye’ll not forget my song.

'I ha' harpit a Shadow out o' the sun  
'To stand before your face and cry;  
'I ha' armed the earth beneath your heel,  
'And over your head I ha' dusked the sky.  
  
'I ha' harpit ye up to the Throne o' God,  
'I ha' harpit your midmost soul in three.  
'I ha' harpit ye down to the Hinges o' Hell,  
'And—ye—would—make—a Knight o' me!'

## THE SONS OF MARTHA

1907

**T**he Sons of Mary seldom bother, for they have inherited  
that good part;

But the Sons of Martha favour their Mother of the careful  
soul and the troubled heart.

And because she lost her temper once, and because she was  
rude to the Lord her Guest,

Her Sons must wait upon Mary's Sons, world without end,  
reprieve, or rest.

It is their care in all the ages to take the buffet and cushion  
the shock.

It is their care that the gear engages; it is their care that the  
switches lock.

It is their care that the wheels run truly; it is their care to  
embark and entrain,

Tally, transport, and deliver duly the Sons of Mary by  
land and main.

They say to mountains, 'Be ye removèd.' They say to the  
lesser floods, 'Be dry.'

Under their rods are the rocks reprovèd—they are not  
afraid of that which is high.

Then do the hill-tops shake to the summit—then is the bed  
of the deep laid bare,  
That the Sons of Mary may overcome it, pleasantly sleeping  
and unaware.

They finger death at their gloves' end where they piece and  
repiece the living wires.

He rears against the gates they tend: they feed him hungry  
behind their fires.

Early at dawn, ere men see clear, they stumble into his  
terrible stall,

And hale him forth like a haltered steer, and goad and turn  
him till evenfall.

To these from birth is Belief forbidden; from these till  
death is Relief afar.

They are concerned with matters hidden—under the earth-  
line their altars are—

The secret fountains to follow up, waters withdrawn to  
restore to the mouth,

And gather the floods as in a cup, and pour them again at  
a city's drouth.

They do not preach that their God will rouse them a little  
before the nuts work loose.

They do not teach that His Pity allows them to drop their  
job when they dam'-well choose.

As in the thronged and the lighted ways, so in the dark and  
the desert they stand,

Wary and watchful all their days that their brethren's days  
may be long in the land.

Raise ye the stone or cleave the wood to make a path more  
fair or flat—

Lo, it is black already with blood some Son of Martha  
spilled for that!



Not as a ladder from earth to Heaven, not as a witness to  
any creed,  
But simple service simply given to his own kind in their  
common need.

And the Sons of Mary smile and are blessèd—they know  
the Angels are on their side.

They know in them is the Grace confessèd, and for them  
are the Mercies multiplied.

They sit at the Feet—they hear the Word—they see how  
truly the Promise runs.

They have cast their burden upon the Lord, and—the Lord  
He lays it on Martha's Sons!

## EPITAPHS OF THE WAR

1914-18

### 'EQUALITY OF SACRIFICE'

A. 'I was a Have.' B. 'I was a "have-not."'

(*Together.*) 'What hast thou given which I gave  
not?'

### A SERVANT

We were together since the War began.  
He was my servant—and the better man.

### A SON

My son was killed while laughing at some jest. I would I  
knew  
What it was, and it might serve me in a time when jests are  
few.

### AN ONLY SON

I have slain none except my Mother. She  
(Blessing her slayer) died of grief for me.

### EX-CLERK

Pity not! The Army gave  
Freedom to a timid slave:  
In which Freedom did he find  
Strength of body, will, and mind:  
By which strength he came to prove  
Mirth, Companionship, and Love:  
For which Love to Death he went:  
In which Death he lies content.

### THE WONDER

Body and Spirit I surrendered whole  
To harsh Instructors—and received a soul . . .  
If mortal man could change me through and through  
From all I was—what may The God not do?

### HINDU SEPOY IN FRANCE

This man in his own country prayed we know not to what  
Powers.  
We pray Them to reward him for his bravery in ours.

### THE COWARD

I could not look on Death, which being known,  
Men led me to him, blindfold and alone.

### SHOCK

My name, my speech, my self I had forgot.  
My wife and children came—I knew them not.  
I died. My Mother followed. At her call  
And on her bosom I remembered all.

### A GRAVE NEAR CAIRO

Gods of the Nile, should this stout fellow here  
Get out—get out! He knows not shame nor fear.

## PBLICANS IN THE WILDERNESS

### *A Grave near Halfa*

The blown sand heaps on me, that none may learn  
Where I am laid for whom my children grieve. . . .  
O wings that beat at dawning, ye return  
Out of the desert to your young at eve!

## TWO CANADIAN MEMORIALS

### I

We giving all gained all.  
Neither lament us nor praise.  
Only in all things recall,  
It is Fear, not Death, that slays.

### II

From little towns in a far land we came,  
To save our honour and a world aflame.  
By little towns in a far land we sleep;  
And trust that world we won for you to keep!

## THE FAVOUR

Death favoured me from the first, well knowing I could not  
endure  
To wait on him day by day. He quitted my betters and  
came  
Whistling over the fields, and, when he had made all sure,  
'Thy line is at end,' he said, 'but at least I have saved its  
name.'

## THE BEGINNER

On the first hour of my first day  
In the front trench I fell.  
(Children in boxes at a play  
Stand up to watch it well.)

### R.A.F. (AGED EIGHTEEN)

Laughing through clouds, his milk-teeth still unshed,  
Cities and men he smote from overhead.  
His deaths delivered, he returned to play  
Childlike, with childish things now put away.

### THE REFINED MAN

I was of delicate mind. I stepped aside for my needs,  
Disdaining the common office. I was seen from afar and  
killed. . . .  
How is this matter for mirth? Let each man be judged by  
his deeds.  
*I have paid my price to live with myself on the terms that I  
willed.*

### NATIVE WATER-CARRIER (M.B.F.)

Prometheus brought down fire to men.  
This brought up water.  
The Gods are jealous—now, as then,  
Giving no quarter.

### THE SLEEPY SENTINEL

Faithless the watch that I kept: now I have none to keep.  
I was slain because I slept: now I am slain I sleep.  
Let no man reproach me again, whatever watch is unkept—  
I sleep because I am slain. They slew me because I slept.

### BATTERIES OUT OF AMMUNITION

If any mourn us in the workshop, say  
We died because the shift kept holiday.

### COMMON FORM

If any question why we died,  
Tell them, because our fathers lied.

### A DEAD STATESMAN

I could not dig: I dared not rob:  
Therefore I lied to please the mob.  
Now all my lies are proved untrue  
And I must face the men I slew.  
What tale shall serve me here among  
Mine angry and defrauded young?

### THE REBEL

If I had clamoured at Thy Gate  
For gift of Life on Earth,  
And, thrusting through the souls that wait,  
Flung headlong into birth—  
Even then, even then, for gin and snare  
About my pathway spread,  
Lord, I had mocked Thy thoughtful care  
Before I joined the Dead!  
But now? . . . I was beneath Thy Hand  
Ere yet the Planets came.  
And now—though Planets pass, I stand  
The witness to Thy shame!

### THE OBEDIENT

Daily, though no cars attended,  
Did my prayers arise.  
Daily, though no fire descended,  
Did I sacrifice.  
Though my darkness did not lift,  
Though I faced no lighter odds,  
Though the Gods bestowed no gift,  
None the less,  
None the less, I served the Gods!



### A DRIFTER OFF TARENTUM

He from the wind-bitten North with ship and companions  
descended,

Searching for eggs of death spawned by invisible hulls.  
Many he found and drew forth. Of a sudden the fishery  
ended

In flame and a clamorous breath known to the eye-  
pecking gulls.

### DESTROYERS IN COLLISION

For Fog and Fate no charm is found  
To lighten or amend.

I, hurrying to my bride, was drowned—  
Cut down by my best friend.

### CONVOY ESCORT

I was a shepherd to fools  
Causelessly bold or afraid.  
They would not abide by my rules.  
Yet they escaped. For I stayed.

### UNKNOWN FEMALE CORPSE

Headless, lacking foot and hand,  
Horrible I come to land.

I beseech all women's sons  
Know I was a mother once.

### RAPED AND REVENGED

One used and butchered me: another spied  
Me broken—for which thing an hundred died.  
So it was learned among the heathen hosts  
How much a freeborn woman's favour costs.

### SALONIKAN GRAVE

I have watched a thousand days  
Push out and crawl into night  
Slowly as tortoises.  
Now I, too, follow these.  
It is fever, and not the fight—  
Time, not battle,—that slays.

### THE BRIDEGROOM

Call me not false, beloved,  
If, from thy scarce-known breast  
So little time removed,  
In other arms I rest.

For this more ancient bride,  
Whom coldly I embrace,  
Was constant at my side  
Before I saw thy face.

Our marriage, often set—  
By miracle delayed—  
At last is consummate,  
And cannot be unmade.

Live, then, whom Life shall cure,  
Almost, of Memory,  
And leave us to endure  
Its immortality.

### V.A.D. (MEDITERRANEAN)

Ah, would swift ships had never been, for then we ne'er  
had found,  
These harsh Ægean rocks between, this little virgin  
drowned,

Whom neither spouse nor child shall mourn, but men she  
nursed through pain  
And—certain keels for whose return the heathen look in  
vain.

#### ACTORS

*On a Memorial Tablet in Holy Trinity Church,  
Stratford-on-Avon*

We counterfeited once for your disport  
Men's joy and sorrow: but our day has passed.  
We pray you pardon all where we fell short—  
Seeing we were your servants to this last.

#### JOURNALISTS

*On a Panel in the Hall of the Institute of Journalists*  
We have served our day.

#### 'BOBS'

1898

*(Field-Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar : died in  
France 1914)*

There's a little red-faced man,  
Which is Bobs,  
Rides the tallest 'orse 'e can—  
Our Bobs.

If it bucks or kicks or rears,  
'E can sit for twenty years  
With a smile round both 'is ears—  
Can't yer, Bobs?

Then 'ere's to Bobs Bahadur—little Bobs, Bobs, Bobs!  
'E's our pukka Kandaharder—  
    Fightin' Bobs, Bobs, Bobs!  
'E's the Dook of *Aggy Chel*;<sup>1</sup>  
'E's the man that done us well,  
An' we'll follow 'im to 'ell—  
    Won't we, Bobs?

If a limber's slipped a trace,  
    'Ook on Bobs.  
If a marker's lost 'is place,  
    Dress by Bobs.  
For 'e's eyes all up 'is coat,  
An' a bugle in 'is throat,  
An' you will not play the goat  
    Under Bobs.

'E's a little down on drink,  
    Chaplain Bobs;  
But it keeps us outer Clink—  
    Don't it, Bobs?  
So we will not complain  
Tho' 'e's water on the brain,  
If 'e leads us straight again—  
    Blue-light<sup>2</sup> Bobs.

If you stood 'im on 'is head,  
    Father Bobs,  
You could spill a quart of lead  
    Outer Bobs.  
'E's been at it thirty years,  
An' amassin' souveneers  
In the way o' slugs an' spears—  
    Ain't yer, Bobs?

<sup>1</sup> Get ahead.

<sup>2</sup> Temperance

What 'e does not know o' war,  
Gen'ral Bobs,  
You can arst the shop next door—  
Can't they, Bobs?  
Oh, 'e's little but he's wise,  
'E's a terror for 'is size,  
An'—'e—*does—not—advertise—*  
Do yer, Bobs?

Now they've made a bloomin' Lord  
Outer Bobs,  
Which was but 'is fair reward—  
Weren't it, Bobs?  
So 'e'll wear a coronet  
Where 'is 'elmet used to set;  
But we know you won't forget—  
Will yer, Bobs?

Then 'ere's to Bobs Bahadur—little Bobs, Bobs, Bobs,  
Pocket-Wellin'ton an' *arder*<sup>1</sup>—  
Fightin' Bobs, Bobs, Bobs!  
This ain't no bloomin' ode,  
But you've 'elped the soldier's load,  
An' for benefits bestowed,  
Bless yer, Bobs!

### DANNY DEEVER

'What are the bugles blowin' for?' said Files-on-Parade.

'To turn you out, to turn you out,' the Colour-Sergeant said.

<sup>1</sup> And a half.



‘What makes you look so white, so white?’ said Files-on-Parade.

‘I’m dreadin’ what I’ve got to watch,’ the Colour-Sergeant said.

For they’re hangin’ Danny Deever, you can hear the  
Dead March play,

The Regiment’s in ’ollow square—they’re hangin’ him  
to-day;

They’ve taken of his buttons off an’ cut his stripes  
away,

An’ they’re hangin’ Danny Deever in the mornin’.

‘What makes the rear-rank breathe so ’ard?’ said Files-on-Parade.

‘It’s bitter cold, it’s bitter cold,’ the Colour-Sergeant said.

‘What makes that front-rank man fall down?’ said Files-on-Parade.

‘A touch o’ sun, a touch o’ sun,’ the Colour-Sergeant said.

They are hangin’ Danny Deever, they are marchin’ of  
’im round,

They ’ave ’alted Danny Deever by ’is coffin on the  
ground;

An’ ’e’ll swing in ’arf a minute for a sneakin’ shootin’  
hound—

O they’re hangin’ Danny Deever in the mornin’!

‘’Is cot was right-’and cot to mine,’ said Files-on-Parade.

‘’E’s sleepin’ out an’ far to-night,’ the Colour-Sergeant said.

‘I’ve drunk ’is beer a score o’ times,’ said Files-on-Parade.

‘’E’s drinkin’ bitter beer alone,’ the Colour-Sergeant said.

They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im  
to 'is place,  
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin'—you must look 'im in  
the face;  
Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the Regiment's disgrace,  
While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

'What's that so black agin the sun?' said Files-on-Parade.  
'It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life,' the Colour-Sergeant said.  
'What's that that whimpers over'ead?' said Files-on-Parade.

'It's Danny's soul that's passin' now,' the Colour-Sergeant said.

For they're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the  
quickstep play,

The Regiment's in column, an' they're marchin' us  
away;

Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll want  
their beer to-day,

After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

## TOMMY

I went into a public-'ouse to get a pint o' beer,  
The publican 'e up an' sez, 'We serve no red-coats here.'  
The girls be'ind the bar they laughed an' giggled fit to die,  
I outs into the street again an' to myself sez I :

O it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Tommy, go  
away';

But it's 'Thank you, Mister Atkins,' when the band  
begins to play—

The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to  
play,

O it's 'Thank you, Mister Atkins,' when the band  
begins to play.

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,  
They gave a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me;  
They sent me to the gallery or round the music-'alls,  
But when it comes to fightin', Lord! they'll shove me in  
the stalls!

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Tommy,  
wait outside';

But it's 'Special train for Atkins' when the trooper's  
on the tide—

The troopship's on the tide, my boys, the troopship's  
on the tide,

O it's 'Special train for Atkins' when the trooper's on  
the tide.

Yes, makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you  
sleep

Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation  
cheap;

An' hustlin' drunken soldiers when they're goin' large a  
bit

Is five times better business than paradin' in full kit.

Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Tommy,  
'ow's yer soul?'

But it's 'Thin red line of 'eroes' when the drums begin  
to roll—

The drums begin to roll, my boys, the drums begin to  
roll,

O it's 'Thin red line of 'eroes' when the drums begin  
to roll.

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards  
too,

But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you;

An' if sometimes our conduct isn't all your fancy paints,

Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster  
saints;

While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Tommy,  
fall be'ind,'

But it's 'Please to walk in front, sir,' when there's  
trouble in the wind—

There's trouble in the wind, my boys, there's trouble  
in the wind,

O it's 'Please to walk in front, sir,' when there's  
trouble in the wind.

You talk o' better food for us, an' schools, an' fires, an'  
all:

We'll wait for extry rations if you treat us rational.

Don't mess about the cook-room slops, but prove it to our  
face

The Widow's Uniform is not the soldier-man's disgrace.

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Chuck  
him out, the brute!'

But it's 'Saviour of 'is country' when the guns begin  
to shoot;

An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything  
you please;

An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool—you bet that  
Tommy sees!

### 'FUZZY-WUZZY'

*(Soudan Expeditionary Force. Early Campaigns)*

**W**e've fought with many men acrost the seas,  
An' some of 'em was brave an' some was not:

The Paythan an' the Zulu an' Burmese;

But the Fuzzy was the finest o' the lot.

We never got a ha'porth's change of 'im:

'E squatted in the scrub an' 'ocked our 'orses,

'E cut our sentries up at Suakim,

An' 'e played the cat an' banjo with our forces.

So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the  
Soudan ;  
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class  
fightin' man ;  
We gives you your certificate, an' if you want it  
signed  
We'll come an' 'ave a romp with you whenever you're  
inclined.

We took our chanst among the Kyber 'ills,  
The Boers knocked us silly at a mile,  
The Burman give us Irriwaddy chills,  
An' a Zulu *impi* dished us up in style :  
But all we ever got from such as they  
Was pop to what the Fuzzy made us swaller ;  
We 'eld our bloomin' own, the papers say,  
But man for man the Fuzzy knocked us 'oller.  
Then 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' the missis and  
the kid ;  
Our orders was to break you, an' of course we went  
an' did.  
We sloshed you with Martinis, an' it wasn't 'ardly  
fair ;  
But for all the odds agin' you, Fuzzy-Wuz, you  
broke the square.

'E 'asn't got no papers of 'is own,  
'E 'asn't got no medals nor rewards,  
So we must certify the skill 'e's shown  
In usin' of 'is long two-'anded swords :  
When 'e's 'oppin' in an' out among the bush  
With 'is coffin-'eaded shield an' shovel-spear,  
An 'appy day with Fuzzy on the rush  
Will last an 'ealthy Tommy for a year.



So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' your friends which  
are no more,  
If we 'adn't lost some messmates we would 'elp you to  
deplore.  
But give an' take's the gospel, an' we'll call the bargain  
fair,  
For if you 'ave lost more than us, you crumpled up  
the square!

'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,  
An' before we know, 'e's 'ackin' at our 'ead;  
'E's all 'ot sand an' ginger when alive,  
An' 'e's generally shammin' when 'e's dead.  
'E's a daisy, 'e's a ducky, 'e's a lamb!  
'E's a injia-rubber idiot on the spree,  
'E's the on'y thing that doesn't give a damn  
For a Regiment o' British Infantee!  
So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the  
Soudan;  
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class  
fightin' man;  
An' 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead  
of 'air—  
You big black boundin' beggar—for you broke a  
British square!

### SCREW-GUNS

**S**mokin' my pipe on the mountings, sniffin' the mornin'-  
cool,  
I walks in my old brown gaiters along o' my old brown  
mule,

With seventy gunners be'ind me, an' never a beggar forgets  
It's only the pick of the Army that handles the dear little  
pets—'Tss! 'Tss!

For you all love the screw-guns—the screw-guns they  
all love you!

So when we call round with a few guns, o' course you  
will know what to do—hoo! hoo!

Jest send in your Chief an' surrender—it's worse if  
you fights or you runs:

You can go where you please, you can skid up the  
trees, but you don't get away from the guns!

They sends us along where the roads are, but mostly we  
goes where they ain't.

We'd climb up the side of a sign-board an' trust to the stick  
o' the paint:

We've chivied the Naga an' Looshai; we've give the Afree-  
deeman fits;

For we fancies ourselves at two thousand, we guns that  
are built in two bits—'Tss! 'Tss!

For you all love the screw-guns . . .

If a man doesn't work, why, we drills 'im an' teaches 'im  
'ow to behave.

If a beggar can't march, why, we kills 'im an' rattles 'im  
into 'is grave.

You've got to stand up to our business an' spring without  
snatchin' or fuss.

D'you say that you sweat with the field-guns? By God,  
you must lather with us—'Tss! 'Tss!

For you all love the screw-guns . . .

The eagles is screamin' around us, the river's a-moanin'  
below,

We're clear o' the pine an' the oak-scrub, we're out on the  
rocks an' the snow,

An' the wind is as thin as a whip-lash what carries away  
to the plains  
The rattle an' stamp o' the lead-mules—the jinglety-jink  
o' the chains—'Tss! 'Tss!  
For you all love the screw-guns . . .

There's a wheel on the Horns o' the Mornin', an' a wheel  
on the edge o' the Pit,  
An' a drop into nothin' beneath you as straight as a beggar  
can spit:  
With the sweat runnin' out o' your shirt-sleeves, an' the  
sun off the snow in your face,  
An' 'arf o' the men on the drag-ropes to hold the old gun  
in 'er place—'Tss! 'Tss!  
For you all love the screw-guns . . .

Smokin' my pipe on the mountings, sniffin' the mornin'-  
cool,  
I climbs in my old brown gaiters along o' my old brown  
mule.  
The monkey can say what our road was—the wild-goat 'e  
knows where we passed.  
Stand easy, you long-eared 'old darlin's! Out drag-  
ropes!  
With shrapnel! Hold fast—'Tss! 'Tss!  
For you all love the screw-guns—the screw-guns they  
all love you!  
So when we take tea with a few guns, o' course you  
will know what to do—hoo! hoo!  
Jest send in your Chief an' surrender—it's worse if you  
fights or you runs:  
You may hide in the caves, they'll be only your graves,  
but you can't get away from the guns!

## GUNGA DIN

You may talk o' gin and beer  
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,  
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;  
But when it comes to slaughter  
You will do your work on water,  
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.  
Now in Injia's sunny clime,  
Where I used to spend my time  
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen.  
Of all them blackfaced crew  
The finest man I knew  
Was our regimental bhisti, Gunga Din,  
He was 'Din! Din! Din!  
'You limpin' lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!  
'Hi! Slippery *hitherao*!  
'Water, get it! *Panee lao*,<sup>1</sup>  
'You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din.'

The uniform 'e wore  
Was nothin' much before,  
An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,  
For a piece o' twisty rag  
An' a goatskin water-bag  
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.  
When the sweatin' troop-train lay  
In a sidin' through the day,  
Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows  
crawl,  
We shouted 'Harry By!'<sup>2</sup>  
Till our throats were bricky-dry,  
Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.

<sup>1</sup> Bring water swiftly.

<sup>2</sup> O brother.

It was 'Din! Din! Din!  
'You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?  
'You put some *juldee*<sup>1</sup> in it  
'Or I'll *marrow*<sup>2</sup> you this minute  
'If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!'

'E would dot an' carry one  
Till the longest day was done;  
An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.  
If we charged or broke or cut,  
You could bet your bloomin' nut,  
'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.  
With 'is mussick<sup>3</sup> on 'is back,  
'E would skip with our attack,  
An' watch us till the bugles made 'Retire,'  
An' for all 'is dirty 'ide  
'E was white, clear white, inside  
When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!

It was 'Din! Din! Din!'  
With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the green.  
When the cartridges ran out,  
You could hear the front-ranks shout,  
'Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!'

I shan't forgit the night  
When I dropped be'ind the fight  
With a bullet where my belt-plate should 'a' been.  
I was chokin' mad with thirst,  
An' the man that spied me first  
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.  
'E lifted up my 'ead,  
An' he plugged me where I bled,  
An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water green.

<sup>1</sup> Be quick.  
<sup>2</sup> Hit you.  
<sup>3</sup> Water-skin.



It was crawlin' and it stunk,  
But of all the drinks I've drunk,  
I'm gratefulest to one from Gunga Din.

It was 'Din! Din! Din!

'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;

'E's chawin' up the ground,

'An' 'e's kickin' all around:

'For Gawd's sake git the water, Gunga Din!'

'E carried me away

To where a dooli lay,

An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.

'E put me safe inside,

An' just before 'e died,

'I 'ope you liked your drink,' sez Gunga Din.

So I'll meet 'im later on

At the place where 'e is gone—

Where it's always double drill and no canteen.

'E'll be squattin' on the coals

Givin' drink to poor damned souls,

An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din!

Yes, Din! Din! Din!

You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!

Though I've belted you and flayed you,

By the livin' Gawd that made you,

You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

## THE WIDOW AT WINDSOR

'Ave you 'eard o' the Widow at Windsor

With a hairy gold crown on 'er 'ead?

She 'as ships on the foam—she 'as millions at 'ome

An' she pays us poor beggars in red.

(Ow, poor beggars in red!)

There's 'er nick on the cavalry 'orses,  
There's 'er mark on the medical stores—  
An' 'er troopers you'll find with a fair wind be'ind  
That takes us to various wars.

(Poor beggars!—barbarious wars!)

Then 'ere's to the Widow at Windsor,  
An' 'ere's to the stores an' the guns,  
The men an' the 'orses what makes up the forces  
O' Missis Victorier's sons.

(Poor beggars! Victorier's sons!)

Walk wide o' the Widow at Windsor,  
For 'alf o' Creation she owns:  
We 'ave bought 'er the same with the sword an' the flame,  
An' we've salted it down with our bones.

(Poor beggars!—it's blue with our bones!)

Hands off o' the sons o' the Widow,  
Hands off o' the goods in 'er shop,  
For the Kings must come down an' the Emperors frown  
When the Widow at Windsor says 'Stop!'

(Poor beggars!—we're sent to say 'Stop!')

Then 'ere's to the Lodge o' the Widow,  
From the Pole to the Tropics it runs—  
To the Lodge that we tile with the rank an' the  
file,

An' open in form with the guns.

(Poor beggars!—it's always they guns!)

We 'ave 'eard o' the Widow at Windsor,  
It's safest to leave 'er alone:  
For 'er sentries we stand by the sea an' the land  
Wherever the bugles are blown.

(Poor beggars!—an' don't we get blown!)

Take 'old o' the Wings o' the Mornin',  
An' flop round the earth till you're dead;

But you won't get away from the tune that they play  
To the bloomin' old rag over'ead.

(Poor beggars!—it's 'ot over'ead!)

Then 'ere's to the Sons o' the Widow,  
Wherever, 'owever they roam.

'Ere's all they desire, an' if they require  
A speedy return to their 'ome.

(Poor beggars!—they'll never see 'ome!)

## BELTS

There was a row in Silver Street that's near to Dublin  
Quay,

Between an Irish regiment an' English cavalree;

It started at Revelly an' it lasted on till dark:

The first man dropped at Harrison's, the last forninst the  
Park.

For it was:—'Belts, belts, belts, an' that's one for  
you!'

An' it was 'Belts, belts, belts, an' that's done for  
you!'

O buckle an' tongue

Was the song that we sung

From Harrison's down to the Park!

There was a row in Silver Street—the regiments was  
out,

They called us 'Delhi Rebels,' an' we answered 'Threes  
about!'

That drew them like a hornets' nest—we met them good  
an' large,

The English at the double an' the Irish at the charge.

Then it was:—'Belts, etc.'

There was a row in Silver Street—an' I was in it too;  
We passed the time o' day, an' then the belts went whir-  
raru!

I misremember what occurred, but, subsequent the storm,  
*A Freeman's Journal Supplement* was all *my* uniform.

O it was:—'Belts, etc.'

There was a row in Silver Street—they sent the Polis there,  
The English were too drunk to know, the Irish didn't  
care;

But when they grew impertinent we simultaneous rose,  
Till half o' them was Liffey mud an' half was tattered  
clo'es.

For it was:—'Belts, etc.'

There was a row in Silver Street—it might ha' raged till  
now,

But some one drew his side-arm clear, an' nobody knew  
how;

'Twas Hogan took the point an' dropped; we saw the red  
blood run:

An' so we all was murderers that started out in fun.

While it was:—'Belts, etc.'

There was a row in Silver Street—but that put down the  
shine,

Wid each man whisperin' to his next:—'"Twas never work  
o' mine!'

We went away like beaten dogs, an' down the street we  
bore him,

The poor dumb corpse that couldn't tell the bhoys were  
sorry for him.

When it was:—'Belts, etc.'

There was a row in Silver Street—it isn't over yet,  
For half of us are under guard wid punishments to get;

'Tis all a merricle to me as in the Clink I lie:  
There was a row in Silver Street—begod, I wonder  
why!

But it was:—‘Belts, belts, belts, an’ that’s one for  
you!’

An’ it was, ‘Belts, belts, belts, an’ that’s done for  
you!’

O buckle an’ tongue

Was the song that we sung

From Harrison’s down to the Park!

## THE YOUNG BRITISH SOLDIER

When the ’arf-made recruity goes out to the East  
’E acts like a babe an’ ’e drinks like a beast,  
An’ ’e wonders because ’e is frequent deceased  
Ere ’e’s fit for to serve as a soldier.

Serve, serve, serve as a soldier,

Serve, serve, serve as a soldier

Serve, serve, serve as a soldier,

So-oldier *of* the Queen!

Now all you recruities what’s drafted to-day,  
You shut up your rag-box an’ ’ark to my lay,  
An’ I’ll sing you a soldier as far as I may:

A soldier what’s fit for a soldier.

Fit, fit, fit for a soldier . . .

First mind you steer clear o’ the grog-sellers’ huts,  
For they sell you Fixed Bay’nets that rots out your  
guts—

Ay, drink that ’ud eat the live steel from your butts—

An’ it’s bad for the young British soldier.

Bad, bad, bad for the soldier . . .



When the cholera comes—as it will past a doubt—  
Keep out of the wet and don't go on the shout,  
For the sickness gets in as the liquor dies out,  
An' it crumples the young British soldier.  
Crum-, crum-, crumples the soldier . . .

But the worst o' your foes is the sun over'ead:  
You *must* wear your 'elmet for all that is said:  
If 'e finds you uncovered 'e'll knock you down dead,  
An' you'll die like a fool of a soldier.  
Fool, fool, fool of a soldier . . .

If you're cast for fatigue by a sergeant unkind,  
Don't grouse like a woman nor crack on nor blind;  
Be handy and civil, and then you will find  
That it's beer for the young British soldier.  
Beer, beer, beer for the soldier . . .

Now, if you must marry, take care she is old—  
A troop-sergeant's widow's the nicest, I'm told,  
For beauty won't help if your rations is cold,  
Nor love ain't enough for a soldier.  
'Nough, 'nough, 'nough for a soldier . . .

If the wife should go wrong with a comrade, be loth  
To shoot when you catch 'em—you'll swing, on my  
oath!—  
Make 'im take 'er and keep 'er: that's Hell for them  
both,  
An' you're shut o' the curse of a soldier.  
Curse, curse, curse of a soldier . . .

When first under fire an' you're wishful to duck  
Don't look nor take 'eed at the man that is struck.  
Be thankful you're livin', and trust to your luck  
And march to your front like a soldier.  
Front, front, front like a soldier . . .

When 'arf of your bullets fly wide in the ditch,  
Don't call your Martini a cross-eyed old bitch;  
She's human as you are—you treat her as sich,  
An' she'll fight for the young British soldier  
Fight, fight, fight for the soldier . . .

When shakin' their bustles like ladies so fine,  
The guns o' the enemy wheel into line,  
Shoot low at the limbers an' don't mind the shine,  
For noise never startles the soldier.  
Start-, start-, startles the soldier . . .

If your officer's dead and the sergeants look white,  
Remember it's ruin to run from a fight:  
So take open order, lie down, and sit tight,  
And wait for supports like a soldier.  
Wait, wait, wait like a soldier . . .

When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,  
And the women come out to cut up what remains,  
Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains  
An' go to your Gawd like a soldier.  
Go, go, go like a soldier,  
Go, go, go like a soldier,  
Go, go, go like a soldier,  
So-oldier *of* the Queen!

## MANDALAY

**B**y the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' lazy at the sea,  
There's a Burma girl a-settin', and I know she thinks  
o' me;  
For the wind is in the palm-trees, and the temple-bells they  
say:  
'Come you back, you British soldier; come you back to  
Mandalay!'

Come you back to Mandalay,  
Where the old Flotilla lay:  
Can't you 'ear their paddles chunkin' from Ran-  
goon to Mandalay?  
On the road to Mandalay,  
Where the flyin'-fishes play,  
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China  
'crost the Bay!

'Er petticoat was yaller an' 'er little cap was green,  
An' 'er name was Supi-yaw-lat—jes' the same as Thee-  
baw's Queen,  
An' I seed her first a-smokin' of a whackin' white cheroot,  
An' a-wastin' Christian kisses on an 'eathen idol's  
foot:

Bloomin' idol made o' mud—  
Wot they called the Great Gawd Budd—  
Plucky lot she cared for idols when I kissed 'er  
where she stud!

On the road to Mandalay . . .

When the mist was on the rice-fields an' the sun was  
droppin' slow,  
She'd git 'er little banjo an' she'd sing '*Kulla-lo-lo!*'  
With 'er arm upon my shoulder an' 'er cheek agin my  
cheek

We useter watch the steamers an' the *hathis* pilin' teak.  
Elephints a-pilin' teak  
In the sludgy, sjudgy creek,  
Where the silence 'ung that 'eavy you was 'arf  
afraid to speak!

On the road to Mandalay . . .

But that's all shove be'ind me—long ago an' fur away,  
An' there ain't no 'buses runnin' from the Bank to Man-  
dalay;

An' I'm learnin' 'ere in London what the ten-year soldier  
tells:

'If you've 'eard the East a-callin', you won't never 'eed  
naught else.'

No! you won't 'eed nothin' else

But them spicy garlic smells,

An' the sunshine an' the palm-trees an' the  
tinkly temple-bells;

On the road to Mandalay . . .

I am sick o' wastin' leather on these gritty pavin'-stones,  
An' the blasted English drizzle wakes the fever in my  
bones;

Tho' I walks with fifty 'ousemaids outer Chelsea to the  
Strand,

An' they talks a lot o' lovin', but wot do they understand?

Beefy face an' grubby 'and—

Law! wot do they understand?

I've a neater, sweeter maiden in a cleaner, greener  
land!

On the road to Mandalay . . .

Ship me somewheres east of Suez, where the best is like  
the worst,

Where there aren't no Ten Commandments an' a man can  
raise a thirst;

For the temple-bells are callin', an' it's there that I would  
be—

By the old Moulmein Pagoda, looking lazy at the sea;

On the road to Mandalay.

Where the old Flotilla lay,

With our sick beneath the awnings when we went  
to Mandalay!

On the road to Mandalay,

Where the flyin'-fishes play,

An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China  
'crost the Bay!



## TROOPIN'

*(Old English Army in the East)*

Troopin', troopin', troopin' to the sea:  
'Ere's September come again—the six-year men are free.

O leave the dead be'ind us, for they cannot come away  
To where the ship's a-coalin' up that takes us 'ome to-day.

We're goin' 'ome, we're goin' 'ome,  
Our ship is *at* the shore,  
An' you must pack your 'aversack,  
For we won't come back no more.  
Ho, don't you grieve for me,  
My lovely Mary-Ann!  
For I'll marry you yit on a fourp'ny bit  
As a time-expired man.

The *Malabar's* in 'arbour with the *Jumner* at 'er tail,  
An' the time-expired's waitin' of 'is orders for to sail.  
Ho! the weary waitin' when on Khyber 'ills we lay,  
But the time-expired's waitin' of 'is orders 'ome to-day.

They'll turn us out at Portsmouth wharf in cold an' wet an' rain,  
All wearin' Injian cotton kit, but we will not complain,  
They'll kill us of pneumonia—for that's their little way—  
But damn the chills and fever, men, we're goin' 'ome to-day!

Troopin', troopin', winter's round again!  
See the new draf's pourin' in for the old campaign;  
Ho, you poor recruities, but you've got to earn your pay—  
What's the last from Lunnon, lads? We're goin' there to-day.



Troopin', troopin', give another cheer—  
'Ere's to English women an' a quart of English beer.  
The Colonel an' the Regiment an' all who've got to stay,  
Gawd's Mercy strike 'em gentle! Whoop! we're goin'  
'ome to-day.

We're goin' 'ome, we're goin' 'ome,  
Our ship is *at* the shore,  
An' you must pack your 'aversack,  
For we won't come back no more.  
Ho, don't you grieve for me,  
My lovely Mary-Ann!  
For I'll marry you yit on a fourp'ny bit  
As a time-expired man.

## THE WIDOW'S PARTY

'**W**here have you been this while away,  
                    Johnnie, Johnnie?'  
Out with the rest on a picnic lay,  
                    Johnnie, my Johnnie, aha!  
They called us out of the barrack-yard  
To Gawd knows where from Gosport Hard,  
And you can't refuse when you get the card,  
                    And the Widow gives the party.  
                    (*Bugle: Ta—rara—ra-ra-rara!*)

'What did you get to eat and drink,  
                    Johnnie, Johnnie?'  
Standing water as thick as ink,  
                    Johnnie, my Johnnie, aha!  
A bit o' beef that were three year stored,  
A bit of mutton as tough as a board,  
And a fowl we killed with a sergeant's sword,  
                    When the Widow give the party.

‘What did you do for knives and forks,  
    Johnnie, Johnnie?’  
We carries ’em with us wherever we walks,  
    Johnnie, my Johnnie, aha!  
And some was sliced and some was halved,  
And some was crimped and some was carved,  
And some was gutted and some was starved,  
    When the Widow give the party.

‘What ha’ you done with half your mess,  
    Johnnie, Johnnie?’  
They couldn’t do more and they wouldn’t do less,  
    Johnnie, my Johnnie, aha!  
They ate their whack and they drank their fill,  
And I think the rations has made them ill,  
For half my comp’ny’s lying still  
    Where the Widow give the party.

‘How did you get away—away,  
    Johnnie, Johnnie?’  
On the broad o’ my back at the end o’ the day,  
    Johnnie, my Johnnie, aha!  
I comed away like a bleedin’ toff,  
For I got four niggers to carry me off,  
As I lay in the bight of a canvas trough,  
    When the Widow give the party.

‘What was the end of all the show,  
    Johnnie, Johnnie?’  
Ask my Colonel, for I don’t know,  
    Johnnie, my Johnnie, aha!  
We broke a King and we built a road—  
A court-house stands where the Reg’ment goed.  
And the river’s clean where the raw blood flowed  
    When the Widow give the party.  
    (*Bugle: Ta—rara—ra-ra-rara!*)

## GENTLEMEN-RANKERS

To the legion of the lost ones, to the cohort of the damned,

To my brethren in their sorrow overseas,  
Sings a gentleman of England cleanly bred, machinely crammed,

And a trooper of the Empress, if you please.

Yes, a trooper of the forces who has run his own six horses,

And faith he went the pace and went it blind,  
And the world was more than kin while he held the ready tin,

But to-day the Sergeant's something less than kind.

We're poor little lambs who've lost our way,

Baa! Baa! Baa!

We're little black sheep who've gone astray,

Baa—aa—aa!

Gentlemen-rankers out on the spree,

Damned from here to Eternity,

God ha' mercy on such as we,

Baa! Yah! Bah!

Oh, it's sweet to sweat through stables, sweet to empty kitchen slops,

And it's sweet to hear the tales the troopers tell,  
To dance with blowzy housemaids at the regimental hops

And thrash the cad who says you waltz too well.

Yes, it makes you cock-a-hoop to be 'Rider' to your troop,

And branded with a blasted worsted spur,  
When you envy, O how keenly, one poor Tommy living cleanly

Who blacks your boots and sometimes calls you 'Sir.'

If the home we never write to, and the oaths we never keep,  
And all we know most distant and most dear,  
Across the snoring barrack-room return to break our sleep,  
Can you blame us if we soak ourselves in beer?  
When the drunken comrade mutters and the great guard-  
lantern gutters  
And the horror of our fall is written plain,  
Every secret, self-revealing on the aching whitewashed  
ceiling,  
Do you wonder that we drug ourselves from pain?

We have done with Hope and Honour, we are lost to Love  
and Truth,

We are dropping down the ladder rung by rung,  
And the measure of our torment is the measure of our  
youth.

God help us, for we knew the worst too young!  
Our shame is clean repentance for the crime that brought  
the sentence,

Our pride it is to know no spur of pride,  
And the Curse of Reuben holds us till an alien turf enfolds  
us

And we die, and none can tell Them where we died.

We're poor little lambs who've lost our way,  
Baa! Baa! Baa!

We're little black sheep who've gone astray,  
Baa—aa—aa!

Gentlemen-rankers out on the spree,

Damned from here to Eternity,

God ha' mercy on such as we,

Baa! Yah! Bah!

## PRIVATE ORTHERIS'S SONG

(‘The Courting of Dinah Shadd’—*Life's Handicap*)

**M**y girl she give me the go onest,  
When I was a London lad;  
An' I went on the drink for a fortnight,  
An' then I went to the bad.  
The Queen she give me a shillin'  
To fight for 'er over the seas;  
But Guv'ment built me a fever-trap,  
An' Injia give me disease.  
(*Chorus*) Ho! don't you 'eed what a girl says,  
An' don't you go for the beer;  
But I was an ass when I was at grass,  
An' that is why I'm 'ere.

I fired a shot at a Afghan,  
The beggar 'e fired again,  
An' I lay on my bed with a 'ole in my 'ed,  
An' missed the next campaign!  
I up with my gun at a Burman  
Who carried a bloomin' *dah*,  
But the cartridge stuck and the bay'nit bruk,  
An' all I got was the scar.  
(*Chorus*) Ho! don't you aim at a Afghan,  
When you stand on the skyline clear;  
An' don't you go for a Burman  
If none o' your friends is near.

I served my time for a Corp'ral,  
An' wetted my stripes with pop,  
For I went on the bend with a intimate friend,  
An' finished the night in the 'shop.'



I served my time for a Sergeant;  
The Colonel 'e sez 'No!  
The most you'll see is a full C.B.'  
An' . . . very next night 'twas so!  
(Chorus) Ho! don't you go for a Corp'ral  
Unless your 'ed is clear;  
But I was an ass when I was at grass,  
An' that is why I'm 'ere.

I've tasted the luck o' the Army  
In barrack an' camp an' clink.  
An' I lost my tip through the bloomin' trip  
Along o' the women an' drink.  
I'm down at the heel o' my service,  
An' when I am laid on the shelf,  
My very worst friend from beginning to end  
By the blood of a mouse was myself!  
(Chorus) Ho! don't you 'eed what a girl says,  
An' don't you go for the beer;  
But I was an ass when I was at grass,  
An' that is why I'm 'ere!

## SHILLIN' A DAY

My name is O'Kelly, I've heard the Revelly  
From Birr to Bareilly, from Leeds to Lahore,  
Hong-Kong and Peshawur,  
Lucknow and Etawah,  
And fifty-five more all endin' in 'pore'.  
Black Death and his quickness, the depth and the thickness  
Of sorrow and sickness I've known on my way,  
But I'm old and I'm nervis,  
I'm cast from the Service,  
And all I deserve is a shillin' a day.

(*Chorus*) Shillin' a day,  
Bloomin' good pay—  
Lucky to touch it, a shillin' a day!

Oh, it drives me half crazy to think of the days I  
Went slap for the Ghazi, my sword at my side,  
When we rode Hell-for-leather  
Both squadrons together,  
That didn't care whether we lived or we died.  
But it's no use despairin', my wife must go charin'  
An' me commissairin', the pay-bills to better,  
So if me you be'old  
In the wet and the cold,  
By the Grand Metropold, won't you give me a letter?

(*Full chorus*) Give 'im a letter—  
'Can't do no better,  
Late Troop-Sergeant-Major an'—runs with  
a letter!  
Think what 'e's been,  
Think what 'e's seen.  
Think of his pension an'——  
GAWD SAVE THE QUEEN!

## 'BACK TO THE ARMY AGAIN'

I'm 'ere in a ticky ulster an' a broken billycock 'at,  
A-layin' on to the sergeant I don't know a gun from a  
bat;  
My shirt's doin' duty for jacket, my sock's stickin' out o'  
my boots,  
An' I'm learnin' the damned old goose-step along o' the  
new recruits!

Back to the Army again, sergeant,  
Back to the Army again.  
Don't look so 'ard, for I 'aven't no card,  
I'm back to the Army again!

I done my six years' service. 'Er Majesty sez: 'Good day—  
You'll please to come when you're rung for, an' 'ere's your  
'ole back-pay;  
An' fourpence a day for baccy—an' bloomin' gen'rous,  
too;  
An' now you can make your fortune—the same as your  
orf'cers do.'

Back to the Army again, sergeant,  
Back to the Army again.  
'Ow did I learn to do right-about-turn?  
I'm back to the Army again!

A man o' four-an'-twenty that 'asn't learned of a trade—  
Beside 'Reserve' agin' him—'e'd better be never made.  
I tried my luck for a quarter, an' that was enough for me,  
An' I thought of 'Er Majesty's barricks, an' I thought I'd  
go an' see.

Back to the Army again, sergeant,  
Back to the Army again.  
'Tisn't my fault if I dress when I 'alt—  
I'm back to the Army again!

The sergeant arst no questions, but 'e winked the other eye,  
'E sez to me, "'Shun!' an' I shunted, the same as in days  
gone by;  
For 'e saw the set o' my shoulders, an' I couldn't 'elp  
'oldin' straight  
When me an' the other rookies come under the barrick-  
gate.

Back to the Army again, sergeant,  
Back to the Army again.  
'Oo would ha' thought I could carry an' port?<sup>1</sup>  
I'm back to the Army again!

I took my bath, an' I wallered—for, Gawd, I needed it so!  
I smelt the smell o' the barricks, I 'eard the bugles go.  
I 'eard the feet on the gravel—the feet o' the men what  
drill—

An' I sez to my flutterin' 'eart-strings, I sez to 'em, 'Peace,  
be still!'

Back to the Army again, sergeant,  
Back to the Army again.  
'Oo said I knew when the troopship was due?  
I'm back to the Army again!

I carried my slops to the tailor; I sez to 'im, 'None o' your  
lip!  
You tight 'em over the shoulders, an' loose 'em over the  
'ip,  
For the set o' the tunic's 'orrid.' An' 'e sez to me, 'Strike  
me dead,  
But I thought you was used to the business!' an' so 'e done  
what I said.

Back to the Army again, sergeant,  
Back to the Army again.  
Rather too free with my fancies? Wot—me?  
I'm back to the Army again!

Next week I'll 'ave 'em fitted; I'll buy me a swagger-  
cane;  
They'll let me free o' the barricks to walk on the Hoe  
again,

<sup>1</sup> Carry and port his rifle.

In the name o' William Parsons, that used to be Edward  
Clay,  
An'—any pore beggar that wants it can draw my fourpence  
a day!

Back to the Army again, sergeant,  
Back to the Army again.  
Out o' the cold an' the rain, sergeant,  
Out o' the cold an' the rain.  
'Oo's there?

A man that's too good to be lost you,  
A man that is 'andled an' made—  
A man that will pay what 'e cost you  
In learnin' the others their trade—parade!  
You're droppin' the pick o' the Army  
Because you don't 'elp 'em remain,  
But drives 'em to cheat to get out o' the street  
An' back to the Army again!

## 'BIRDS OF PREY' MARCH

*(Troops for Foreign Service)*

**M**arch! The mud is cakin' good about our trousies.  
Front!—eyes front, an' watch the Colour-casin's  
drip.

Front! The faces of the women in the 'ouses  
Ain't the kind o' things to take aboard the ship.

*Cheer! An' we'll never march to victory.  
Cheer! An' we'll never live to 'ear the cannon roar!  
The Large Birds o' Prey  
They will carry us away,  
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more!*



Wheel! Oh, keep your touch; we're goin' round a corner.

Time!—mark time, an' let the men be'ind us close.  
Lord! The transport's full, an' 'alf our lot not on 'er—  
Cheer, Oh, cheer! We're going off where no one knows.

March! The Devil's none so black as 'e is painted!  
Cheer! We'll 'ave some fun before we're put away.  
'Alt an' 'and 'er out—a woman's gone and fainted!  
Cheer! Get on!—Gawd 'elp the married men to-day!

Hoi! Come up, you 'ungry beggars, to yer sorrow.  
( 'Ear them say they want their tea, an' want it quick! )  
You won't have no mind for slingers,<sup>1</sup> not to-morrow—  
No; you'll put the 'tween-decks stove out, bein' sick!

'Alt! The married kit 'as all to go before us!  
'Course it's blocked the bloomin' gangway up again!  
Cheer, Oh, cheer the 'Orse Guards watchin' tender  
o'er us,  
Keepin' us since eight this mornin' in the rain!

Stuck in 'eavy marchin'-order, sopped and wringin'—  
Sick, before our time to watch 'er 'eave an' fall,  
'Ere's your 'appy 'ome at last, an' stop your singin'.  
'Alt! Fall in along the troop-deck! Silence all!

*Cheer! For we'll never live to see no bloomin' victory!*  
*Cheer! An' we'll never live to 'ear the cannon roar!*  
*(One cheer more!)*  
*The jackal an' the kite*  
*'Ave an 'ealthy appetite,*  
*An' you'll never see your soldiers any more! ('Ip! Urroar!)*

<sup>1</sup> Bread soaked in tea.

*The eagle an' the crow  
They are waitin' ever so,  
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more! ('Ip! Urroar!)*  
*Yes, the Large Birds o' Prey  
They will carry us away,  
An' you'll never see your soldiers any more!*

### **'SOLDIER AN' SAILOR TOO'**

*(The Royal Regiment of Marines)*

**A**s I was spittin' into the Ditch aboard o' the *Crocodile*,  
I seed a man on a man-o'-war got up in the Reg'lars  
style.

'E was scrapin' the paint from off of 'er plates, an' I sez to  
'im, "'Oo are you?'

Sez 'e, 'I'm a Jolly—'Er Majesty's Jolly—soldier an' sailor  
too!'

Now 'is work begins by Gawd knows when, and 'is work  
is never through;

'E isn't one o' the reg'lar Line, nor 'e isn't one of the crew.  
'E's a kind of a giddy harumfrodite—soldier an' sailor too!

An', after, I met 'im all over the world, a-doin' all kinds of  
things,

Like landin' 'isself with a Gatlin' gun to talk to them  
'eathen kings;

'E sleeps in an 'ammick instead of a cot, an' 'e drills with  
the deck on a slew,

An' 'e sweats like a Jolly—'Er Majesty's Jolly—soldier  
an' sailor too!

For there isn't a job on the top o' the earth the beggar don't  
know, nor do—

You can leave 'im at night on a bald man's 'ead, to paddle  
'is own canoe—  
'E's a sort of a bloomin' cosmopolouse—soldier an' sailor  
too.

We've fought 'em in trooper, we've fought 'em in dock,  
and drunk with 'em in between,  
When they called us the seasick scull'ry-maids, an' we  
called 'em the Ass-Marines;  
But, when we was down for a double fatigue, from Wool-  
wich to Bernardmyo,  
We sent for the Jollies—'Er Majesty's Jollies—soldier an'  
sailor too!  
They think for 'emselves, an' they steal for 'emselves, and  
they never ask what's to do,  
But they're camped an' fed an' they're up an' fed before  
our bugle's blew.  
Ho! they ain't no limpin' procrastitutes—soldier an'  
sailor too.

You may say we are fond of an 'arness-cut, or 'ootin' in  
barrick-yards,  
Or startin' a Board School mutiny along o' the Onion  
Guards;<sup>1</sup>  
But once in a while we can finish in style for the ends of the  
earth to view,  
The same as the Jollies—'Er Majesty's Jollies—soldier an'  
sailor too!  
They come of our lot, they was brothers to us; they was  
beggars we'd met an' knew;  
Yes, barrin' an inch in the chest an' the arm, they was  
doubles o' me an' you;  
For they weren't no special chrysanthemums—soldier an'  
sailor too!

<sup>1</sup> Long ago, a battalion of the Guards was sent to Bermuda as a punishment for riotous conduct in barracks.

To take your chance in the thick of a rush, with firing all  
about,  
Is nothing so bad when you've cover to 'and, an' leave an'  
likin' to shout;  
But to stand an' be still to the *Birken'ead* drill<sup>1</sup> is a damn'  
tough bullet to chew,  
An' they done it, the Jollies—'Er Majesty's Jollies—  
soldier an' sailor too!  
Their work was done when it 'adn't begun; they was  
younger nor me an' you;  
Their choice it was plain between drownin' in 'eaps an'  
bein' mopped by the screw,  
So they stood an' was still to the *Birken'ead* drill, soldier  
an' sailor too!

We're most of us liars, we're 'arf of us thieves, an' the rest  
are as rank as can be,  
But once in a while we can finish in style (which I 'ope it  
won't 'appen to me).  
But it makes you think better o' you an' your friends, an'  
the work you may 'ave to do,  
When you think o' the sinkin' *Victorier's*<sup>2</sup> Jollies—soldier  
an' sailor too!  
Now there isn't no room for to say ye don't know—they  
'ave proved it plain and true—  
That, whether it's Widow, or whether's it's ship, Victorier's  
work is to do,  
An' they done it, the Jollies—'Er Majesty's Jollies—soldier  
an' sailor too!

<sup>1</sup> In 1852 the *Birkenhead* transport was sunk off Simon's Bay. The Marines aboard her went down as drawn up on her deck.

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Tryon's flagship, sunk in collision in 1893.

## SAPPERS

(*Royal Engineers*)

When the Waters were dried an' the Earth did appear,  
(‘It’s all one,’ says the Sapper),  
The Lord He created the Engineer,  
Her Majesty’s Royal Engineer,  
With the rank and pay of a Sapper!

When the Flood come along for an extra monsoon,  
’Twas Noah constructed the first pontoon  
To the plans of Her Majesty’s, etc.

But after fatigue in the wet an’ the sun,  
Old Noah got drunk, which he wouldn’t ha’ done  
If he’d trained with, etc.

When the Tower o’ Babel had mixed up men’s *bat*,<sup>1</sup>  
Some clever civilian was managing that,  
An’ none of, etc.

When the Jews had a fight at the foot of a hill,  
Young Joshua ordered the sun to stand still,  
For he was a Captain of Engineers, etc.

When the Children of Israel made bricks without straw,  
They were learnin’ the regular work of our Corps,  
The work of, etc.

For ever since then, if a war they would wage,  
Behold us a-shinin’ on history’s page—  
First page for, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Talk.



We lay down their sidings an' help 'em entrain,  
An' we sweep up their mess through the bloomin' campaign,  
In the style of, etc.

They send us in front with a fuse an' a mine  
To blow up the gates that are rushed by the Line,  
But bent by, etc.

They send us behind with a pick an' a spade,  
To dig for the guns of a bullock-brigade  
Which has asked for, etc.

We work under escort in trousers and shirt,  
An' the heathen they plug us tail-up in the dirt,  
Annoying, etc.

We blast out the rock an' we shovel the mud,  
We make 'em good roads an'—they roll down the *khud*<sup>1</sup>  
Reporting, etc.

We make 'em their bridges, their wells, an' their huts,  
An' the telegraph-wire the enemy cuts,  
An' it's blamed on, etc.

An' when we return, an' from war we would cease,  
They grudge us adornin' the billets of peace,  
Which are kept for, etc.

We build 'em nice barracks—they swear they are bad,  
That our Colonels are Methodist, married or mad,  
Insultin', etc.

They haven't no manners nor gratitude too,  
For the more that we help 'em, the less will they do,  
But mock at, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Hillside.

Now the Line's but a man with a gun in his hand,  
An' Cavalry's only what horses can stand,  
When helped by, etc.

Artillery moves by the leave o' the ground,  
But we are the men that do something all round,  
For we are, etc.

I have stated it plain, an' my argument's thus  
(‘It's all one,’ says the Sapper)  
There's only one Corps which is perfect—that's us;  
An' they call us Her Majesty's Engineers,  
Her Majesty's Royal Engineers,  
With the rank and pay of a Sapper!

## THAT DAY

It got beyond all orders an' it got beyond all 'ope;  
It got to shammin' wounded an' retirin' from the 'alt.  
'Ole companies was lookin' for the nearest road to slope;  
It were just a bloomin' knock-out—an' our fault!

*Now there ain't no chorus 'ere to give,  
Nor there ain't no band to play;  
An' I wish I was dead 'fore I done what I did,  
Or seen what I seed that day!*

We was sick o' bein' punished, an' we let 'em know it, too;  
An' a company-commander up an' 'it us with a sword,  
An' someone shouted, ‘'Ook it!’ an' it come to *sove-ki-  
poo*,  
An' we chucked our rifles from us—O my Gawd!

There was thirty dead an' wounded on the ground we  
wouldn't keep—

No, there wasn't more than twenty when the front begun  
to go—

But, Christ! along the line o' flight they cut us up like  
sheep,

An' that was all we gained by doin' so!

I 'eard the knives be'ind me, but I dursn't face my man,  
Nor I don't know where I went to, 'cause I didn't 'alt to  
see,

Till I 'eard a beggar squealin' out for quarter as 'e ran,  
An' I thought I knew the voice an'—it was me!

We was 'idin' under bedsteads more than 'arf a march  
away:

We was lyin' up like rabbits all about the country-side;  
An' the Major cursed 'is Maker 'cause 'e'd lived to see  
that day,

An' the Colonel broke 'is sword acrost, an' cried.

We was rotten 'fore we started—we was never *disciplined*;

We made it out a favour if an order was obeyed.

Yes, every little drummer 'ad 'is rights an' wrongs to mind,  
So we had to pay for teachin'—an' we paid!

The papers 'id it 'andsome, but you know the Army knows;

We was put to groomin' camels till the regiments with-  
drew,

An' they gave us each a medal for subduin' England's foes,

An' I 'ope you like my song—because it's true!

*An' there ain't no chorus 'ere to give,*

*Nor there ain't no band to play;*

*But I wish I was dead 'fore I done what I did,*

*Or seen what I seed that day!*

# 'THE MEN THAT FOUGHT AT MINDEN'

*(In the Lodge of Instruction)*

**T**he men that fought at Minden, they was rookies in their time—

So was them that fought at Waterloo!  
All the 'ole command, yuss, from Minden to Maiwand,  
They was once dam' sweeps like you!

*Then do not be discouraged, 'Eaven is your 'elper,  
We'll learn you not to forget;  
An' you mustn't swear an' curse, or you'll only catch it  
worse,  
For we'll make you soldiers yet!*

The men that fought at Minden, they 'ad stocks beneath  
their chins,  
Six inch 'igh an' more;  
But fatigue it was their pride, and they *would* not be  
denied  
To clean the cook-'ouse floor.

The men that fought at Minden, they had anarchistic  
bombs  
Served to 'em by name of 'and-grenades;  
But they got it in the eye (same as you will by-an'-by)  
When they clubbed their field-parades.

The men that fought at Minden, they 'ad buttons up an'  
down,  
Two-an'-twenty dozen of 'em told;  
But they didn't grouse an' shirk at an hour's extry  
work,  
They kept 'em bright as gold.

The men that fought at Minden, they was armed with  
  musketoons,  
  Also, they was drilled by 'alberdiers.  
I don't know what they were, but the sergeants took good  
  care  
  They washed be'ind their ears.

The men that fought at Minden, they 'ad ever cash in 'and  
  Which they did not bank nor save,  
But spent it gay an' free on their betters—such as me—  
  For the good advice I gave.

The men that fought at Minden, they was civil—yuss, they  
  was—  
  Never didn't talk o' rights an' wrongs,  
But they got it with the toe (same as you will get it—so!)—  
  For interrupting songs.

The men that fought at Minden, they was several other  
  things  
  Which I don't remember clear;  
But *that's* the reason why, now the six-year men are dry,  
  The rooks will stand the beer!

*Then do not be discouraged, 'Eaven is your 'elper,  
  We'll learn you not to forget.  
An' you mustn't swear an' curse, or you'll only catch it  
  worse,  
  An' we'll make you soldiers yet!*

*Soldiers yet, if you've got it in you—  
  All for the sake of the Core;  
Soldiers yet, if we 'ave to skin you—  
  Run an' get the beer, Johnny Raw—Johnny Raw!  
  Ho! run an' get the beer, Johnny Raw!*



## THE LADIES

I've taken my fun where I've found it;  
I've rogued an' I've ranged in my time  
I've 'ad my pickin' o' sweethearts,  
An' four o' the lot was prime.  
One was an 'arf-caste widow,  
One was a woman at Prome,  
One was the wife of a *jemadar-sais*,<sup>1</sup>  
An' one is a girl at 'ome.

*Now I aren't no 'and with the ladies,  
For, takin' 'em all along,  
You never can say till you've tried 'em,  
An' then you are like to be wrong.  
There's times when you'll think that you mightn't,  
There's times when you'll know that you might;  
But the things you will learn from the Yellow an' Brown,  
They'll 'elp you a lot with the White!*

I was a young un at 'Oogli,  
Shy as a girl to begin;  
Aggie de Castrer she made me,  
An' Aggie was clever as sin;  
Older than me, but my first un—  
More like a mother she were—  
Showed me the way to promotion an' pay,  
An' I learned about women from 'er!

Then I was ordered to Burma,  
Actin' in charge o' Bazar,  
An' I got me a tiddy live 'eathen  
Through buyin' supplies off 'er pa.

<sup>1</sup> Head-groom.

Funny an' yellow an' faithful—  
Doll in a teacup she were—  
But we lived on the square, like a true-married pair,  
An' I learned about women from 'er!

Then we was shifted to Neemuch  
(Or I might ha' been keepin' 'er now),  
An' I took with a shiny she-devil,  
The wife of a nigger at Mhow;  
'Taught me the gipsy-folks' *bole*;¹  
Kind o' volcano she were,  
For she knifed me one night 'cause I wished she was  
white,  
And I learned about women from 'er!

Then I come 'ome in a trooper,  
'Long of a kid o' sixteen—  
'Girl from a convent at Meerut,  
The straightest I ever 'ave seen.  
Love at first sight was 'er trouble,  
*She* didn't know what it were;  
An' I wouldn't do such, 'cause I liked 'er too much,  
But—I learned about women from 'er!

I've taken my fun where I've found it,  
An' now I must pay for my fun,  
For the more you 'ave known o' the others  
The less will you settle to one;  
An' the end of it's sittin' and thinkin',  
An' dreamin' Hell-fires to see;  
So be warned by my lot (which I know you will  
not),  
An' learn about women from me!

¹ Slang.

*What did the Colonel's Lady think?  
Nobody never knew.  
Somebody asked the Sergeant's Wife,  
An' she told 'em true!  
When you get to a man in the case,  
They're like as a row of pins—  
For the Colonel's Lady an' Judy O'Grady  
Are sisters under their skins!*

### **'FOLLOW ME 'OME'**

**T**here was no one like 'im, 'Orse or Foot,  
Nor any o' the Guns I knew;  
An' because it was so, why, o' course 'e went an' died,  
Which is just what the best men do.

*So it's knock out your pipes an' follow me!  
An' it's finish up your swipes an' follow me!  
Oh, 'ark to the big drum callin',  
Follow me—follow me 'ome!*

'Is mare she neighs the 'ole day long,  
She paws the 'ole night through.  
An' she won't take 'er feed 'cause o' waitin' for 'is  
step,  
Which is just what a beast would do.

'Is girl she goes with a bombardier  
Before 'er month is through;  
An' the banns are up in church, for she's got the beggar  
hooked,  
Which is just what a girl would do.

We fought 'bout a dog—last week it were—  
No more than a round or two;  
But I strook 'im cruel 'ard, an' I wish I 'adn't now,  
Which is just what a man can't do.

'E was all that I 'ad in the way of a friend,  
An' I've 'ad to find one new;  
But I'd give my pay an' stripe for to get the beggar back,  
Which it's just too late to do!

*So it's knock out your pipes an' follow me!  
An' it's finish up your swipes an' follow me!  
Oh, 'ark to the fifes a-crawlin'!  
Follow me—follow me 'ome!*

*Take 'im away! 'E's gone where the best men go.  
Take 'im away! An' the gun-wheels turnin' slow.  
Take 'im away! There's more from the place 'e come.  
Take 'im away, with the limber an' the drum.*

*For it's 'Three rounds blank' an' follow me,  
An' it's 'Thirteen rank' an' follow me;  
Oh, passin' the love o' women,  
Follow me—follow me 'ome!*

## THE SERGEANT'S WEDDIN'

'E was warned agin 'er—  
That's what made 'im look;  
She was warned agin' 'im—  
That is why she took.  
Wouldn't 'ear no reason,  
'Went an' done it blind;  
We know all about 'em,  
They've got all to find!

*Cheer for the Sergeant's weddin'—  
Give 'em one cheer more!  
Grey gun-'orses in the lando,  
An' a rogue is married to, etc.*

What's the use o' tellin'  
'Arf the lot she's been?  
'E's a bloomin' robber,  
An' 'e keeps canteen.  
'Ow did 'e get 'is buggy?  
Gawd, you needn't ask!  
'Made 'is forty gallon  
Out of every cask!

Watch 'im, with 'is 'air cut,  
Count us filin' by—  
Won't the Colonel praise 'is  
Pop—u—lar—i—ty!  
We 'ave scores to settle—  
Scores for more than beer;  
She's the girl to pay 'em—  
That is why we're 'ere!

See the Chaplain thinkin'?  
See the women smile?  
Twig the married winkin'  
As they take the aisle?  
Keep your side-arms quiet,  
Dressin' by the Band.  
Ho! You 'oly beggars,  
Cough be'ind your 'and!

Now it's done an' over,  
'Ear the organ squeak,  
"Voice that breathed o'er Eden"—  
Ain't she got the cheek!



White an' laylock ribbons,  
'Think yourself so fine!  
I'd pray Gawd to take yer  
'Fore I made yer mine!

Escort to the kerridge,  
Wish 'im luck, the brute!  
Chuck the slippers after—  
(Pity 'tain't a boot!)  
Bowin' like a lady,  
Blushin' like a lad—  
'Oo would say to see 'em  
Both is rotten bad?

*Cheer for the Sergeant's weddin'—  
Give 'em one cheer more!  
Grey gun-'orses in the lando,  
An' a rogue is married to, etc.*

## THE 'EATHEN

**T**he 'eathen in 'is blindness bows down to wood an'  
stone;  
'E don't obey no orders unless they is 'is own;  
'E keeps 'is side-arms awful: 'e leaves 'em all about,  
An' then comes up the Regiment an' pokes the 'eathen out.

*All along o' dirtiness, all along o' mess,  
All along o' doin' things rather-more-or-less,  
All along of abby-nay,<sup>1</sup> kul,<sup>2</sup> an' hazar-ho,<sup>3</sup>  
Mind you keep your rifle an' yourself jus' so!*

<sup>1</sup> Not now.

<sup>2</sup> To-morrow.

<sup>3</sup> Wait a bit.

The young recruit is 'aughty—'e draf's from Gawd knows where;

They bid 'im show 'is stockin's an' lay 'is mattress square;  
'E calls it bloomin' nonsense—'e doesn't know, no more—  
An' then up comes 'is Company an' kicks 'im round the floor!

The young recruit is 'ammered—'e takes it very hard;  
'E 'angs 'is 'ead an' mutters—'e sulks about the yard;  
'E talks o' 'cruel tyrants' which 'e'll swing for by-an'-by,  
An' the others 'ears an' mocks 'im, an' the boy goes orf to cry.

The young recruit is silly—'e thinks o' suicide.  
'E's lost 'is gutter-devil; 'e 'asn't got 'is pride;  
But day by day they kicks 'im, which 'elps 'im on a bit,  
Till 'e finds 'isself one mornin' with a full an' proper kit.

*Gettin' clear o' dirtiness, gettin' done with mess,  
Gettin' shut o' doin' things rather-more-or-less;  
Not so fond of abby-nay, kul, nor hazar-ho,  
Learns to keep 'is rifle an' 'isself jus' so!*

The young recruit is 'appy—'e throws a chest to suit;  
You see 'im grow mustaches; you 'ear 'im slap 'is boot.  
'E learns to drop the 'bloodies' from every word 'e slings,  
An' 'e shows an 'ealthy brisket when 'e strips for bars an' rings.

The cruel-tyrant-sergeants they watch 'im 'arf a year;  
They watch 'im with 'is comrades, they watch 'im with 'is beer;

They watch 'im with the women at the regimental dance,  
And the cruel-tyrant-sergeants send 'is name along for  
'Lance'.

An' now 'e's 'arf o' nothin', an' all a private yet,  
'Is room they up an' rags 'im to see what they will get.  
They rags 'im low an' cunnin', each dirty trick they  
can,  
But 'e learns to sweat 'is temper an' 'e learns to sweat 'is  
man.

An', last, a Colour-Sergeant, as such to be obeyed,  
'E schools 'is men at cricket, 'e tells 'em on parade;  
They sees 'im quick an' 'andy, uncommon set an'  
smart,  
An' so 'e talks to oficers which 'ave the Core at 'eart.

'E learns to do 'is watchin' without it showin' plain;  
'E learns to save a dummy, an' shove 'im straight again;  
'E learns to check a ranker that's buying leave to shirk;  
An' 'e learns to make men like 'im so they'll learn to like  
their work.

An' when it comes to marchin' he'll see their socks are  
right,  
An' when it comes to action 'e shows 'em how to sight.  
'E knows their ways of thinkin' and just what's in their  
mind;  
'E knows when they are takin' on an' when they've fell  
be'ind.

'E knows each talkin' corp'ral that leads a squad astray;  
'E feels 'is innards 'eavin', 'is bowels givin' way;  
'E sees the blue-white faces all tryin' 'ard to grin,  
An' 'e stands an' waits an' suffers till it's time to cap  
'em in.

An' now the hugly bullets come peckin' through the  
dust,

An' no one wants to face 'em, but every beggar must;  
So, like a man in irons, which isn't glad to go,  
They moves 'em off by companies uncommon stiff an'  
slow.

Of all 'is five years' schoolin' they don't remember  
much

Excep' the not retreatin', the step an' keepin' touch.  
It looks like teachin' wasted when they duck an' spread an'  
'op—

But if 'e 'adn't learned 'em they'd be all about the shop.

An' now it's "Oo goes backward?" an' now it's "Oo comes  
on?"

And now it's 'Get the doolies,' an' now the Captain's  
gone;

An' now it's bloody murder, but all the while they  
'ear

'Is voice, the same as barrick-drill, a-shepherdin' the  
rear.

'E's just as sick as they are, 'is 'eart is like to split,  
But 'e works 'em, works 'em, works 'em till he feels 'em  
take the bit;

The rest is 'oldin' steady till the watchful bugles play,  
An' 'e lifts 'em, lifts 'em, lifts 'em through the charge that  
wins the day!

*The 'eathen in 'is blindness bows down to wood an'  
stone;*

*'E don't obey no orders unless they is 'is own.*

*The 'eathen in 'is blindness must end where 'e began,*

*But the backbone of the Army is the Non-commissioned  
Man!*

*Keep away from dirtiness—keep away from mess,  
Don't get into doin' things rather-more-or-less!  
Let's ha' done with abby-nay, kul, and hazar-ho;  
Mind you keep your rifle an' yourself jus' so!*

### **'FOR TO ADMIRE'**

**T**he Injian Ocean sets an' smiles  
So sof', so bright, so bloomin' blue;  
There aren't a wave for miles an' miles  
Excep' the jiggle from the screw.  
The ship is swep', the day is done,  
The bugle's gone for smoke and play;  
An' black ag'in the settin' sun  
The Lascar sings, '*Hum deckty hai!*'<sup>1</sup>

*For to admire an' for to see,  
For to be'old this world so wide—  
It never done no good to me,  
But I can't drop it if I tried!*

I see the sergeants pitchin' quoits,  
I 'ear the women laugh an' talk,  
I spy upon the quarter-deck  
The orficers an' lydies walk.  
I thinks about the things that was,  
An' leans an' looks acrost the sea,  
Till, spite of all the crowded ship,  
There's no one lef' alive but me.

The things that was which I 'ave seen,  
In barrick, camp, an' action too,  
I tells them over by myself,  
An' sometimes wonders if they're true;

<sup>1</sup> I'm looking out.



For they was odd—most awful odd—  
But all the same, now they are o'er,  
There must be 'eaps o' plenty such,  
An' if I wait I'll see some more.

Oh, I 'ave come upon the books,  
An' frequent broke a barrick-rule,  
An' stood beside an' watched myself  
Be'avin' like a bloomin' fool.  
I paid my price for findin' out,  
Nor never grutched the price I paid,  
But sat in Clink without my boots,  
Admirin' 'ow the world was made.

Be'old a cloud upon the beam,  
An' 'umped above the sea appears  
Old Aden, like a barrick-stove  
That no one's lit for years an' years.  
I passed by that when I began,  
An' I go 'ome the road I came,  
A time-expired soldier-man  
With six years' service to 'is name.

My girl she said, 'Oh, stay with me!'  
My mother 'eld me to 'er breast.  
They've never written none, an' so  
They must 'ave gone with all the rest—  
With all the rest which I 'ave seen  
An' found an' known an' met along.  
I cannot say the things I feel,  
And so I sing my evenin' song:

*For to admire an' for to see,  
For to be'old this world so wide—  
It never done no good to me,  
But I can't drop it if I tried!*

## THE ABSENT-MINDED BEGGAR

When you've shouted 'Rule Britannia,' when you've  
sung 'God save the Queen,'

When you've finished killing Kruger with your mouth,  
Will you kindly drop a shilling in my little tambourine

For a gentleman in khaki ordered South?  
He's an absent-minded beggar, and his weaknesses are  
great—

But we and Paul must take him as we find him—  
He is out on active service, wiping something off a slate—

And he's left a lot of little things behind him!  
Duke's son—cook's son—son of a hundred kings—  
(Fifty thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay!)  
Each of 'em doing his country's work  
(and who's to look after their things?)  
Pass the hat for your credit's sake,

and pay—pay—pay!

There are girls he married secret, asking no permission to,  
For he knew he wouldn't get it if he did.

There is gas and coals and vittles, and the house-rent  
falling due,

And it's more than rather likely there's a kid.  
There are girls he walked with casual. They'll be sorry now  
he's gone,

For an absent-minded beggar they will find him,  
But it ain't the time for sermons with the winter coming  
on.

We must help the girl that Tommy's left behind him!  
Cook's son—Duke's son—son of a belted Earl—

Son of a Lambeth publican—it's all the same to-day!  
Each of 'em doing his country's work  
(and who's to look after the girl?)  
Pass the hat for your credit's sake,

and pay—pay—pay!

There are families by thousands, far too proud to beg or  
     speak,  
 And they'll put their sticks and bedding up the  
     spout,  
 And they'll live on half o' nothing, paid 'em punctual once  
     a week,  
 'Cause the man that earns the wage is ordered  
     out.  
 He's an absent-minded beggar, but he heard his country  
     call,  
 And his reg'ment didn't need to send to find  
     him!  
 He chucked his job and joined it—so the job before  
     us all  
 Is to help the home that Tommy's left behind him!  
 Duke's job—cook's job—gardener, baronet, groom,  
 Mews or palace or paper-shop, there's someone gone  
     away!  
 Each of 'em doing his country's work  
     (and who's to look after the room?)  
 Pass the hat for your credit's sake,  
                     and pay—pay—pay!  
  
 Let us manage so as, later, we can look him in the  
     face,  
 And tell him—what he'd very much prefer—  
 That, while he saved the Empire, his employer saved his  
     place,  
 And his mates (that's you and me) looked out for  
     *her*.  
 He's an absent-minded beggar and he may forget it all,  
 But we do not want his kiddies to remind him  
 That we sent 'em to the workhouse while their daddy  
     hammered Paul,  
 So we'll help the homes that Tommy left behind  
     him!

Cook's home—Duke's home—home of a millionaire,  
(Fifty thousand horse and foot going to Table Bay !)  
Each of 'em doing his country's work  
(and what have you got to spare?)  
Pass the hat for your credit's sake,  
and pay—pay—pay!

## CHANT-PAGAN

*(English Irregular, discharged)*

Me that 'ave been what I've been—  
Me that 'ave gone where I've gone—  
Me that 'ave seen what I've seen—  
'Ow can I ever take on  
With awful old England again,  
An' 'ouses both sides of the street,  
And 'edges two sides of the lane,  
And the parson an' gentry between,  
An' touchin' my 'at when we meet—  
Me that 'ave been what I've been?

Me that 'ave watched 'arf a world  
'Eave up all shiny with dew,  
Kopje on kop to the sun,  
An' as soon as the mist let 'em through  
Our 'elios winkin' like fun—  
Three sides of a ninety-mile square,  
Over valleys as big as a shire—  
'*Are ye there? Are ye there? Are ye there?*'  
An' then the blind drum of our fire . . .  
An' I'm rollin' 'is lawns for the Squire,  
Me!

Me that 'ave rode through the dark  
Forty mile, often, on end,  
Along the Ma'ollisberg Range,  
With only the stars for my mark  
An' only the night for my friend,  
An' things runnin' off as you pass,  
An' things jumpin' up in the grass,  
An' the silence, the shine an' the size  
Of the 'igh, unexpressible skies—  
I am takin' some letters almost  
As much as a mile to the post,  
An' 'mind you come back with the change!'  
Me!

Me that saw Barberton took  
When we dropped through the clouds on their  
'ead,  
An' they 'ove the guns over and fled—  
Me that was through Di'mond 'Ill,  
An' Pieters an' Springs an' Belfast—  
From Dundee to Vereeniging all—  
Me that stuck out to the last  
(An' five bloomin' bars on my chest)—  
I am doin' my Sunday-school best,  
By the 'elp of the Squire and 'is wife  
(Not to mention the 'ousemaid an' cook),  
To come in an' 'ands up an' be still,  
An' honestly work for my bread,  
My livin' in that state of life  
To which it shall please God to call  
Me!

Me that 'ave followed my trade  
In the place where the Lightnin's are made;  
'Twixt the Rains and the Sun and the Moon—  
Me that lay down an' got up



Three years with the sky for my roof—  
That 'ave ridden my 'unger an' thirst  
Six thousand raw mile on the hoof,  
With the Vaal and the Orange for cup,  
An' the Brandwater Basin for dish,—  
Oh! it's 'ard to be'ave as they wish  
(Too 'ard, an' a little too soon),  
I'll 'ave to think over it first—

Me!

I will arise an' get 'ence—  
I will trek South and make sure  
If it's only my fancy or not  
That the sunshine of England is pale,  
And the breezes of England are stale,  
An' there's somethin' gone small with the lot.  
For *I* know of a sun an' a wind,  
An' some plains and a mountain be'ind,  
An' some graves by a barb-wire fence,  
An' a Dutchman I've fought 'oo might give  
Me a job were I ever inclined  
To look in an' offsaddle an' live  
Where there's neither a road nor a tree—  
But only my Maker an' me,  
And I think it will kill me or cure,  
So I think I will go there an' see.

Me!

## BOOTS

### *(Infantry Columns)*

**W**e're foot—slog—slog—slog—sloggin' over Africa—  
Foot—foot—foot—foot—sloggin' over Africa—  
(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up and down  
again!)

There's no discharge in the war!

Seven—six—eleven—five—nine-an'-twenty mile to-day—  
Four—eleven—seventeen—thirty-two the day before—  
(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up and down  
again!)

There's no discharge in the war!

Don't—don't—don't—don't—look at what's in front of  
you.

(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down  
again);

Men—men—men—men—men go mad with watchin' 'em,  
An' there's no discharge in the war!

Try—try—try—try—to think o' something different—  
Oh—my—God—keep—me from goin' lunatic!  
(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down  
again!)

There's no discharge in the war!

Count—count—count—count—the bullets in the bando-  
liers.

If—your—eyes—drop—they will get atop o' you!  
(Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up and down  
again)—

There's no discharge in the war!

We—can—stick—out—'unger, thirst, an' weariness,  
But—not—not—not—not the chronic sight of 'em—  
Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down  
again,

An' there's no discharge in the war!

'Tain't—so—bad—by—day because o' company,  
But night—brings—long—strings—o' forty thousand  
million  
Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down  
again.

There's no discharge in the war!

I—'ave—marched—six—weeks in 'Ell'an' certify  
It—is—not—fire—devils, dark, or anything,  
But boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up an' down  
again,

An' there's no discharge in the war!

## THE MARRIED MAN

*(Reservist of the Line)*

The bachelor 'e fights for one  
As joyful as can be;  
But the married man don't call it fun,  
Because 'e fights for three—  
For 'Im an' 'Er an' It  
(An' Two an' One make Three)  
'E wants to finish 'is little bit,  
An' 'e wants to go 'ome to 'is tea!

The bachelor pokes up 'is 'ead  
To see if you are gone;  
But the married man lies down instead,  
An' waits till the sights come on,  
For 'Im an' 'Er an' a hit  
(Direct or ricochee)  
'E wants to finish 'is little bit,  
An' 'e wants to go 'ome to 'is tea.

The bachelor will miss you clear  
To fight another day;  
But the married man, 'e says 'No fear!'  
'E wants you out of the way  
Of 'Im an' 'Er an' It  
(An' 'is road to 'is farm or the sea),  
'E wants to finish 'is little bit,  
An' 'e wants to go 'ome to 'is tea.

The bachelor 'e fights 'is fight  
An' stretches out an' snores;  
But the married man sits up all night—  
For 'e don't like out-o'-doors.  
'E'll strain an' listen an' peer  
An' give the first alarm—  
For the sake o' the breathin' 'e's used to 'ear,  
An' the 'ead on the thick of 'is arm.

The bachelor may risk 'is 'ide  
To 'elp you when you're downed;  
But the married man will wait beside  
Till the ambulance comes round.  
'E'll take your 'ome address  
An' all you've time to say,  
Or if 'e sees there's 'ope, 'e'll press  
Your art'ry 'alf the day—

For 'Im an' 'Er an' It  
 (An' One from Three leaves Two),  
 For 'e knows you wanted to finish your bit,  
 An' 'e knows 'oo's wantin' you.  
 Yes, 'Im an' 'Er an' It  
 (Our 'oly One in Three),  
 We're all of us anxious to finish our bit,  
 An' we want to get 'ome to our tea!

Yes, It an' 'Er an' 'Im,  
 Which often makes me think  
 The married man must sink or swim  
 An'—'e can't afford to sink!  
 Oh, 'Im an' It an' 'Er  
 Since Adam an' Eve began!  
 So I'd rather fight with the bachelor  
 An' be nursed by the married man!

## STELLENBOSCH

*(Composite Columns)*

The General 'eard the firin' on the flank,  
 An' 'e sent a mounted man to bring 'im back  
 The silly, pushin' person's name an' rank  
 'Oo'd dared to answer Brother Boer's attack:  
 For there might 'ave been a serious engagement,  
 An' 'e might 'ave wasted 'alf a dozen men;  
 So 'e ordered 'im to stop 'is operations round the  
 kopjes,  
 An' 'e told 'im off before the Staff at ten!

And it all goes into the laundry,  
 But it never comes out in the wash,



'Ow we're sugared about by the old men  
( 'Eavy-sterned amateur old men!)  
That 'amper an' 'inder an' scold men  
For fear o' Stellenbosch!<sup>1</sup>

The General 'ad 'produced a great effect',  
The General 'ad the country cleared—almost;  
The General 'ad no reason to expect',  
And the Boers 'ad us bloomin' well on toast!  
For we might 'ave crossed the drift before the twilight,  
Instead o' sitting down an' takin' root;  
But we was not allowed, so the Boojers scooped the crowd,  
To the last survivin' bandolier an' boot.

The General saw the farm'ouse in 'is rear,  
With its stoep so nicely shaded from the sun;  
Sez 'e, 'I'll pitch my tabernacle 'ere,'  
An' 'e kept us muckin' round till 'e 'ad done.  
For 'e might 'ave caught the confluent pneumonia  
From sleepin' in his gaiters in the dew;  
So 'e took a book an' dozed while the other columns  
closed,  
And De Wet's commando out an' trickled through!

The General saw the mountain-range ahead,  
With their 'elios showin' saucy on the 'eight,  
So 'e 'eld us to the level ground instead,  
An' telegraphed the Boojers wouldn't fight.  
For 'e might 'ave gone an' sprayed 'em with a pompom,  
Or 'e might 'ave slung a squadron out to see—  
But 'e wasn't takin' chances in them 'igh an' 'ostile  
kranzes—  
He was markin' time to earn a K.C.B.

<sup>1</sup> The more notoriously incompetent commanders used to be sent to the town of Stellenbosch, which name became a verb.

The General got 'is decorations thick  
(The men that backed 'is lies could not complain),  
The Staff 'ad D.S.O.'s till we was sick,  
An' the soldier—'ad the work to do again!  
For 'e might 'ave known the District was an 'otbed,  
Instead of 'andin' over, upside-down,  
To a man 'oo 'ad to fight 'alf a year to put it right,  
While the General sat an' slandered 'im in town!

An' it all went into the laundry,  
But it never came out in the wash.  
We were sugared about by the old men  
(Panicky, perishin' old men)  
That 'amper an' 'inder an' scold men  
For fear o' Stellenbosch!

## PIET

*(Regular of the Line)*

I do not love my Empire's foes,  
Nor call 'em angels; still,  
What is the sense of 'ating those  
'Oom you are paid to kill?  
So, barrin' all that foreign lot  
Which only joined for spite,  
Myself, I'd just as soon as not  
Respect the man I fight.

Ah, there, Piet!—'is trousers to 'is knees,  
'Is coat-tails lyin' level in the bullet-sprinkled breeze;  
'E does not lose 'is rifle an' 'e does not lose 'is  
seat.

I've known a lot o' people ride a dam' sight worse  
than Piet.

I've 'eard 'im cryin' from the ground  
 Like Abel's blood of old,  
 An' skirmished out to look, an' found  
 The beggar nearly cold.  
 I've waited on till 'e was dead  
 (Which couldn't 'elp 'im much),  
 But many grateful things 'e's said  
 To me for doin' such.  
 Ah, there, Piet! whose time 'as come to die,  
 'Is carcase past rebellion, but 'is eyes inquiren' why.  
 Though dressed in stolen uniform with badge o' rank  
 complete,  
 I've known a lot o' fellers go a dam' sight worse than  
 Piet.

An' when there wasn't aught to do  
 But camp and cattle-guards,  
 I've fought with 'im the 'ole day through  
 At fifteen 'undred yards;  
 Long afternoons o' lying still,  
 An' 'earin' as you lay  
 The bullets swish from 'ill to 'ill  
 Like scythes among the 'ay.  
 Ah, there, Piet!—be'ind 'is stony kop—  
 With 'is Boer bread an' biltong,<sup>1</sup> an' 'is flask of awful  
 Dop;<sup>2</sup>  
 'Is Mauser for amusement an' 'is pony for retreat,  
 I've known a lot o' fellers shoot a dam' sight worse  
 than Piet.

He's shoved 'is rifle 'neath my nose  
 Before I'd time to think,  
 An' borrowed all my Sunday clo'es  
 An' sent me 'ome in pink;

<sup>1</sup> Dried meat.

<sup>2</sup> Cape brandy.

An' I 'ave crept (Lord, 'ow I've crept!)

On 'ands an' knees I've gone,  
And spooored and floored and caught and kept  
An' sent him to Ceylon!<sup>1</sup>

Ah, there, Piet!—you've sold me many a pup,  
When week on week alternate it was you an' me  
'ands up!

But though I never made *you* walk man-naked in the  
'eat,

I've known a lot of fellows stalk a dam' sight worse  
than Piet.

From Plewman's to Marabastad,

From Ookiep to De Aar,

Me an' my trusty friend 'ave 'ad,

As you might say, a war;

But seein' what both parties done

Before 'e owned defeat,

I ain't more proud of 'avin' won

Than I am pleased with Piet.

Ah, there, Piet!—picked up be'ind the drive!

The wonder wasn't 'ow 'e fought, but 'ow 'e kep'  
alive,

With nothin' in 'is belly, on 'is back, or to 'is feet—

I've known a lot o' men behave a dam' sight worse  
than Piet.

No more I'll 'ear 'is rifle crack

Along the block'ouse fence—

The beggar's on the peaceful tack,

Regardless of expense;

For countin' what 'e eats an' draws,

An' gifts an' loans as well,

'E's gettin' 'alf the Earth, because

'E didn't give us 'Ell!

<sup>1</sup> One of the camps for prisoners of this war was in Ceylon.

Ah, there, Piet! with your brand-new English plough,  
Your gratis tents an' cattle, an' your most ungrateful  
frow,  
You've made the British taxpayer rebuild your  
country-seat—  
I've known some pet battalions charge a dam' sight  
less than Piet.

## UBIQUE

*(Royal Artillery)*

**T**here is a word you often see, pronounce it as you  
may—  
'You bike,' 'you bykwee,' 'ubbikwe'—alludin' to R.A.  
It serves 'Orse, Field, an' Garrison as motto for a crest;  
An' when you've found out all it means I'll tell you 'alf  
the rest.

Ubique means the long-range Krupp be'ind the low-range  
'ill—

Ubique means you'll pick it up an', while you do, stand  
still.

Ubique means you've caught the flash an' timed it by the  
sound.

Ubique means five gunners' 'ash before you've loosed a  
round.

Ubique means Blue Fuse,<sup>1</sup> an' make the 'ole to sink the  
trail.

Ubique means stand up an' take the Mauser's 'alf-mile 'ail.

Ubique means the crazy team not God nor man can 'old.

Ubique means that 'orse's scream which turns your innards  
cold!

<sup>1</sup> Extreme range.



Ubique means 'Bank, 'Olborn, Bank—a penny all the way'—

The soothin', jingle-bump-an'-clank from day to peaceful day.

Ubique means 'They've caught De Wet, an' now we shan't be long.'

Ubique means 'I much regret, the beggar's goin' strong!'

Ubique means the tearin' drift where, breech-blocks jammed with mud,

The khaki muzzles duck an' lift across the khaki flood.

Ubique means the dancing plain that changes rocks to Boers.

Ubique means mirage again an' shellin' all outdoors.

Ubique means 'Entrain at once for Grootdefeatfontein.'

Ubique means 'Off-load your guns'—at midnight in the rain!

Ubique means 'More mounted men. Return all guns to store.'

Ubique means the R.A.M.R. Infantillery Corps.<sup>1</sup>

Ubique means that warnin' grunt the perished linesman knows,

When o'er 'is strung an' sufferin' front the shrapnel sprays 'is foes;

An' as their firin' dies away the 'usky whisper runs

From lips that 'aven't drunk all day: 'The Guns! Thank Gawd, the Guns!'

Extreme, depressed, point-blank or short, end-first or any'ow,

<sup>1</sup> The Royal Artillery Mounted Rifles—when mounted infantry were badly needed.

From Colesberg Kop to Quagga's Poort—from Ninety-  
Nine till now—

By what I've 'eard the others tell an' I in spots 'ave seen,  
There's nothin' this side 'Eaven or 'Ell Ubique doesn't  
mean!

## THE RETURN

*(All Arms)*

Peace is declared, an' I return  
To 'Ackneystadt, but not the same;  
Things 'ave transpired which made me learn  
The size and meanin' of the game.  
I did no more than others did,  
I don't know where the change began.  
I started as a average kid,  
I finished as a thinkin' man.

*If England was what England seems,  
An' not the England of our dreams,  
But only putty, brass, an' paint,  
'Ow quick we'd drop 'er! But she ain't!*

Before my gappin' mouth could speak  
I 'eard it in my comrade's tone.  
I saw it on my neighbour's cheek  
Before I felt it flush my own.  
An' last it come to me—not pride,  
Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole  
(If such a term may be applied),  
The makin's of a bloomin' soul.

Rivers at night that cluck an' jeer,  
Plains which the moonshine turns to sea,  
Mountains which never let you near,  
An' stars to all eternity;

An' the quick-breathin' dark that fills  
The 'ollows of the wilderness,  
When the wind worries through the 'ills—  
These may 'ave taught me more or less.

Towns without people, ten times took,  
An' ten times left an' burned at last;  
An' starving dogs that come to look  
For owners when a column passed;  
An' quiet, 'omesick talks between  
Men, met by night, you never knew  
Until—'is face—by shellfire seen—  
Once—an' struck off. *They* taught me too.

The day's lay-out—the mornin' sun  
Beneath your 'at-brim as you sight;  
The dinner-'ush from noon till one,  
An' the full roar that lasts till night;  
An' the pore dead that look so old  
An' was so young an hour ago,  
An' legs tied down before they're cold—  
These are the things which make you know.

Also Time runnin' into years—  
A thousand Places left be'ind—  
An' Men from both two 'emispheres  
Discussin' things of every kind;  
So much more near than I 'ad known,  
So much more great than I 'ad guessed—  
An' me, like all the rest, alone—  
But reachin' out to all the rest!

So 'ath it come to me—not pride,  
Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole  
(If such a term may be applied),  
The makin's of a bloomin' soul.

But now, discharged, I fall away  
To do with little things again. . . .  
Gawd, 'oo knows all I cannot say,  
Look after me in Thamesfontein!<sup>1</sup>

*If England was what England seems,  
An' not the England of our dreams,  
But only putty, brass, an' paint,  
'Ow quick we'd chuck 'er! But she ain't!*

‘CITIES AND THRONES AND POWERS’  
(‘A Centurion of the Thirtieth’—*Puck of Pook's Hill*)

Cities and Thrones and Powers  
Stand in Time's eye,  
Almost as long as flowers,  
Which daily die:  
But, as new buds put forth  
To glad new men,  
Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth  
The Cities rise again.

This season's Daffodil,  
She never hears  
What change, what chance, what chill,  
Cut down last year's;  
But with bold countenance,  
And knowledge small,  
Esteems her seven days' continuance  
To be perpetual.

<sup>1</sup> London.

So Time that is o'er-kind  
To all that be,  
Ordains us e'en as blind,  
As bold as she:  
That in our very death,  
And burial sure,  
Shadow to shadow, well persuaded, saith,  
'See how our works endure!'

## THE RECALL

(*'An Habitation Enforced'—Actions and Reactions*)

I am the land of their fathers.  
In me the virtue stays.  
I will bring back my children,  
After certain days.

Under their feet in the grasses  
My clinging magic runs.  
They shall return as strangers.  
They shall remain as sons.

Over their heads in the branches  
Of their new-bought, ancient trees,  
I weave an incantation  
And draw them to my knees.

Scent of smoke in the evening,  
Smell of rain in the night—  
The hours, the days and the seasons,  
Order their souls aright,

Till I make plain the meaning  
Of all my thousand years—  
Till I fill their hearts with knowledge,  
While I fill their eyes with tears.



## PUCK'S SONG

*(Enlarged from 'Puck of Pook's Hill')*

See you the ferny ride that steals  
Into the oak-woods far?  
O that was whence they hewed the keels  
That rolled to Trafalgar.

And mark you where the ivy clings  
To Bayham's mouldering walls?  
O there we cast the stout railings  
That stand around St. Paul's.

See you the dimpled track that runs  
All hollow through the wheat?  
O that was where they hauled the guns  
That smote King Philip's fleet.

(Out of the Weald, the secret Weald,  
Men sent in ancient years  
The horse-shoes red at Flodden Field,  
The arrows at Poitiers!)

See you our little mill that clacks,  
So busy by the brook?  
She has ground her corn and paid her tax  
Ever since Domesday Book.

See you our stilly woods of oak,  
And the dread ditch beside?  
O that was where the Saxons broke  
On the day that Harold died.

See you the windy levels spread  
About the gates of Rye?  
O that was where the Northmen fled,  
When Alfred's ships came by.

See you our pastures wide and lone,  
Where the red oxen browse?  
O there was a City thronged and known,  
Ere London boasted a house.

And see you, after rain, the trace  
Of mound and ditch and wall?  
O that was a Legion's camping-place,  
When Caesar sailed from Gaul.

And see you mark ; that show and fade,  
Like shadows on the Downs?  
O they are the lines the Flint Men made,  
To guard their wondrous towns.

Trackway and Camp and City lost,  
Salt Marsh where now is corn—  
Old Wars, old Peace, old Arts that cease,  
And so was England born!

She is not any common Earth,  
Water or wood or air,  
But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye,  
Where you and I will fare!

## THE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS

(‘Marklake Witches’—*Rewards and Fairies*)

They shut the road through the woods  
Seventy years ago.  
Weather and rain have undone it again,  
And now you would never know  
There was once a road through the woods  
Before they planted the trees.

It is underneath the coppice and heath  
And the thin anemones.  
Only the keeper sees  
That, where the ring-dove broods,  
And the badgers roll at ease,  
There was once a road through the woods.

Yet, if you enter the woods  
Of a summer evening late,  
When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools  
Where the otter whistles his mate,  
(They fear not men in the woods,  
Because they see so few.)  
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,  
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,  
Steadily cantering through  
The misty solitudes,  
As though they perfectly knew  
The old lost road through the woods. . . .  
But there is no road through the woods.

### A THREE-PART SONG

(“Dymchurch Flit”—*Puck of Pook's Hill*)

I'm just in love with all these three,  
The Weald and the Marsh and the Down countree.  
Nor I don't know which I love the most,  
The Weald or the Marsh or the white Chalk coast!

I've buried my heart in a ferny hill,  
Twix' a liddle low shaw an' a great high gill.  
Oh, hop-bine yaller an' wood-smoke blue,  
I reckon you'll keep her middling true!

I've loosed my mind for to out and run  
On a Marsh that was old when Kings begun.  
Oh, Romney Level and Brenzett reeds,  
I reckon you know what my mind needs!

I've given my soul to the Southdown grass,  
And sheep-bells tinkled where you pass.  
Oh, Firle an' Ditchling an' sails at sea,  
I reckon you keep my soul for me!

## THE RUN OF THE DOWNS

(‘The Knife and the Naked Chalk’—*Rewards and Fairies*)

*The Weald is good, the Downs are best—  
I'll give you the run of 'em, East to West.*  
Beachy Head and Winddoor Hill,  
They were once and they are still.  
Firle, Mount Caburn and Mount Harry  
Go back as far as sums'll carry.  
Ditchling Beacon and Chanctonbury Ring,  
They have looked on many a thing,  
And what those two have missed between 'em,  
I reckon Truleigh Hill has seen 'em.  
Highden, Bignor and Duncton Down  
Knew Old England before the Crown.  
Linch Down, Treyford and Sunwood  
Knew Old England before the Flood;  
And when you end on the Hampshire side—  
Butser's old as Time and Tide.  
*The Downs are sheep, the Weald is corn,  
You be glad you are Sussex born!*

## SIR RICHARD'S SONG

(A.D. 1066)

(‘Young Men at the Manor’—*Puck of Pook’s Hill*)

I followed my Duke ere I was a lover,  
To take from England fief and fee;  
But now this game is the other way over—  
But now England hath taken me!

I had my horse, my shield and banner,  
And a boy’s heart, so whole and free;  
But now I sing in another manner—  
But now England hath taken me!

As for my Father in his tower,  
Asking news of my ship at sea,  
He will remember his own hour—  
Tell him England hath taken me!

As for my Mother in her bower,  
That rules my Father so cunningly,  
She will remember a maiden’s power—  
Tell her England hath taken me!

As for my Brother in Rouen City,  
A nimble and naughty page is he,  
But he will come to suffer and pity—  
Tell him England hath taken me!

As for my little Sister waiting  
In the pleasant orchards of Normandie,  
Tell her youth is the time for mating—  
Tell her England hath taken me!



As for my comrades in camp and highway,  
That lift their eyebrows scornfully,  
Tell them their way is not my way—  
Tell them England hath taken me!

Kings and Princes and Barons famed,  
Knights and Captains in your degree;  
Hear me a little before I am blamed—  
Seeing England hath taken me!

Howso great man's strength be reckoned,  
There are two things he cannot flee.  
Love is the first, and Death is the second—  
And Love in England hath taken me!

## A TREE SONG

(A.D. 1200)

(‘Weland’s Sword’—*Puck of Pook’s Hill*)

**O**f all the trees that grow so fair,  
Old England to adorn,  
Greater are none beneath the Sun  
Than Oak, and Ash, and Thorn.  
Sing Oak, and Ash, and Thorn, good sirs,  
(All of a Midsummer morn!)  
Surely we sing no little thing  
In Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Oak of the Clay lived many a day  
Or ever Æneas began.  
Ash of the Loam was a lady at home  
When Brut was an outlaw man.

Thorn of the Down saw New Troy Town  
(From which was London born);  
Witness hereby the ancientry  
Of Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Yew that is old in churchyard-mould,  
He breedeth a mighty bow.  
Alder for shoes do wise men choose,  
And beech for cups also.  
But when ye have killed, and your bowl is spilled,  
And your shoes are clean outworn,  
Back ye must speed for all that ye need  
To Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Ellum she hateth mankind, and waiteth  
Till every gust be laid  
To drop a limb on the head of him  
That anyway trusts her shade.  
But whether a lad be sober or sad,  
Or mellow with ale from the horn,  
He will take no wrong when he lieth along  
'Neath Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Oh, do not tell the Priest our plight,  
Or he would call it a sin;  
But—we have been out in the woods all night,  
A-conjuring Summer in!  
And we bring you news by word of mouth—  
Good news for cattle and corn—  
Now is the Sun come up from the South  
With Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Sing Oak, and Ash, and Thorn, good sirs  
(All of a Midsummer morn)!  
England shall bide till Judgment Tide  
By Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

## A CHARM

*(Introduction to 'Rewards and Fairies')*

Take of English earth as much  
As either hand may rightly clutch.  
In the taking of it breathe  
Prayer for all who lie beneath.  
Not the great nor well-bespoke,  
But the mere uncounted folk  
Of whose life and death is none  
Report or lamentation.

Lay that earth upon thy heart,  
And thy sickness shall depart!

It shall sweeten and make whole  
Fevered breath and festered soul.  
It shall mightily restrain  
Over-busied hand and brain.  
It shall ease thy mortal strife  
'Gainst the immortal woe of life,  
Till thyself, restored, shall prove  
By what grace the Heavens do move.

Take of English flowers these—  
Spring's full-faced primroses,  
Summer's wild wide-hearted rose,  
Autumn's wall-flower of the close,  
And, thy darkness to illume,  
Winter's bee-thronged ivy-bloom.  
Seek and serve them where they bide  
From Candlemas to Christmas-tide,  
For these simples, used aright,  
Can restore a failing sight.

These shall cleanse and purify  
Webbed and inward-turning eye;

These shall show thee treasure hid  
Thy familiar fields amid;  
And reveal (which is thy need)  
Every man a King indeed!

## CHAPTER HEADINGS

### PLAIN TALES FROM THE HILLS

Look, you have cast out Love! What Gods are these  
You bid me please?  
The Three in One, the One in Three? Not so!  
To my own Gods I go.  
It may be they shall give me greater ease  
Than your cold Christ and tangled Trinities.

*Lispeth.*

When the earth was sick and the skies were grey,  
And the woods were rotted with rain,  
The Dead Man rode through the autumn day  
To visit his love again.

His love she neither saw nor heard,  
So heavy was her shame;  
And tho' the babe within her stirred  
She knew not that he came.

*The Other Man.*

Cry 'Murder' in the market-place, and each  
Will turn upon his neighbour anxious eyes  
Asking: 'Art thou the man?' We hunted Cain  
Some centuries ago across the world.  
This bred the fear our own misdeeds maintain  
To-day.

*His Wedded Wife.*

Go, stalk the red deer o'er the heather,  
Ride, follow the fox if you can!  
But, for pleasure and profit together,  
Allow me the hunting of Man—  
The chase of the Human, the search for the Soul  
To its ruin—the hunting of Man.

*Pig.*

“Stopped in the straight when the race was his own—  
Look at him cutting it—cur to the bone!”  
Ask ere the youngster be rated and chidden  
What did he carry and how was he ridden?  
Maybe they used him too much at the start.  
Maybe Fate's weight-cloth is breaking his heart.

*In the Pride of his Youth.*

‘And some are sulky, while some will plunge.  
(*So ho! Steady! Stand still, you!*)  
Some you must gentle, and some you must lunge.  
(*There! There! Who wants to kill you?*)  
Some—there are losses in every trade—  
Will break their hearts ere bitted and made,  
Will fight like fiends as the rope cuts hard,  
And die dumb-mad in the breaking-yard.’

*Thrown Away.*

The World hath set its heavy yoke  
Upon the old white-bearded folk  
Who strive to please the King.  
God's mercy is upon the young,  
God's wisdom in the baby tongue  
That fears not anything.

*Tods' Amendment.*

Not though you die to-night, O Sweet, and wail,  
A spectre at my door,  
Shall mortal Fear make Love immortal fail—  
I shall but love you more,



Who, from Death's House returning, give me still  
One moment's comfort in my matchless ill.

*By Word of Mouth.*

They burnt a corpse upon the sand—  
The light shone out afar;  
It guided home the plunging dhows  
That beat from Zanzibar.  
Spirit of Fire, where'er Thy altars rise,  
Thou art the Light of Guidance to our eyes!

*In Error.*

Ride with an idle whip, ride with an unused heel,  
But, once in a way, there will come a day  
When the colt must be taught to feel  
The lash that falls, and the curb that galls, and the sting of  
the rowelled steel.

*The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin.*

It was not in the open fight  
We threw away the sword,  
But in the lonely watching  
In the darkness by the ford.  
The waters lapped, the night-wind blew,  
Full-armed the Fear was born and grew,  
And we were flying ere we knew  
From panic in the night.

*The Rout of the White Hussars.*

In the daytime, when she moved about me,  
In the night, when she was sleeping at my side,—  
I was wearied, I was wearied of her presence.  
Day by day and night by night I grew to hate her—  
Would God that she or I had died!

*The Bronckhorst Divorce Case.*

A stone's throw out on either hand  
From that well-ordered road we tread,  
And all the world is wild and strange;  
*Churel*<sup>1</sup> and ghoul and Djinn and sprite  
Shall bear us company to-night,  
For we have reached the Oldest Land  
Wherein the Powers of Darkness range.

*In the House of Suddhoo.*

To-night, God knows what thing shall tide,  
The Earth is racked and fain—  
Expectant, sleepless, open-eyed;  
And we, who from the Earth were made,  
Thrill with our Mother's pain.

*False Dawn.*

Pit where the buffalo cooled his hide,  
By the hot sun emptied, and blistered and dried;  
Log in the plume-grass, hidden and lone;  
Bund where the earth-rat's mounds are strown;  
Cave in the bank where the sly stream steals;  
Aloe that stabs at the belly and heels,  
Jump if you dare on a steed untried—  
Safer it is to go wide—go wide!  
*Hark, from in front where the best men ride:—*  
*'Pull to the off, boys! Wide! Go wide!'*

*Cupid's Arrows.*

He drank strong waters and his speech was coarse;  
He purchased raiment and forbore to pay;  
He stuck a trusting junior with a horse,  
And won gymkhanas in a doubtful way.  
Then, 'twixt a vice and folly, turned aside  
To do good deeds—and straight to cloak them, lied.

*A Bank Fraud.*

<sup>1</sup> The ghost of a woman who has died in childbirth.

Thus, for a season, they fought it fair—  
She and his cousin May—  
Tactful, talented, debonair,  
Decorous foes were they;  
But never can battle of man compare  
With merciless feminine fray.

*The Rescue of Pluffles.*

Then a pile of heads he laid—  
Thirty thousand heaped on high—  
All to please the Kafir maid  
Where the Oxus rippled by.  
Grimly spake Atulla Khan:—  
'Love hath made this thing a Man.'

*His Chance in Life.*

Rosicrucian subtleties  
In the Orient had rise.  
Ye may find their teachers still  
Under Jacatâlâ's Hill.  
Seek ye Bombast Paracelsus,  
Read what Fludd the Seeker tells us  
Of the Dominant that runs  
Through the cycle of the Suns.  
Read my story last and see  
Luna at her apogee.

*Consequences.*

So we loosed a bloomin' volley  
An' we made the beggars cut,  
An' when our pooch was emptied out  
We used the bloomin' butt.  
Ho! My! Don't you come anigh  
When Tommy is a-playin' with the bay'nit an' the butt!

*The Taking of Lungtungpen.*

Pleasant it is for the Little Tin Gods  
When great Jove nods;  
But Little Tin Gods make their little mistakes  
In missing the hour when great Jove wakes.

*A Germ-Destroyer.*

There is a tide in the affairs of men  
Which, taken any way you please, is bad,  
And strands them in forsaken guts and creeks  
No decent soul would think of visiting.  
You cannot stop the tide; but, now and then,  
You may arrest some rash adventurer,  
Who—h'm—will hardly thank you for your pains.

*Kidnapped.*

While the snaffle holds or the long-neck stings,  
While the big beam tilts or the last bell rings,  
While horses are horses to train and to race,  
Then women and wine take a second place

For me—for me—

While a short 'ten-three'

Has a field to squander or fence to face.

*The Broken-Link Handicap.*

Little Blind Fish, thou art marvellous wise!  
Little Blind Fish, who put out thy eyes?  
Open thy ears while I whisper my wish.  
Bring me a lover, thou little Blind Fish!

*The Bisara of Pooree.*

## COLD IRON

(‘Cold Iron’—*Rewards and Fairies*)

‘*Gold is for the mistress—silver for the maid—  
Copper for the craftsman cunning at his trade.*’  
‘Good!’ said the Baron, sitting in his hall,  
‘But Iron—Cold Iron—is master of them all.’

So he made rebellion ’gainst the King his liege,  
Camped before his citadel and summoned it to siege.  
‘Nay!’ said the cannoneer on the castle wall,  
‘But Iron—Cold Iron—shall be master of you all!’

Woe for the Baron and his knights so strong,  
When the cruel cannon-balls laid ’em all along;  
He was taken prisoner, he was cast in thrall,  
And Iron—Cold Iron—was master of it all!

Yet his King spake kindly (ah, how kind a Lord!)  
‘What if I release thee now and give thee back thy sword?’  
‘Nay!’ said the Baron, ‘mock not at my fall,  
For Iron—Cold Iron—is master of men all.’

‘*Tears are for the craven, prayers are for the clown—  
Halters for the silly neck that cannot keep a crown.*’  
‘As my loss is grievous, so my hope is small,  
For Iron—Cold Iron—must be master of men all!’

Yet his King made answer (few such Kings there be!)  
‘Here is Bread and here is Wine—sit and sup with me.  
Eat and drink in Mary’s Name, the whiles I do recall  
How Iron—Cold Iron—can be master of men all!’



He took the Wine and blessed it. He blessed and break  
the Bread.

With His own Hands He served Them, and presently He  
said:

‘See! These Hands they pierced with nails, outside My  
city wall,

Show Iron—Cold Iron—to be master of men all.

‘Wounds are for the desperate, blows are for the strong.  
Balm and oil for weary hearts all cut and bruised with  
wrong.

I forgive thy treason—I redeem thy fall—

For Iron—Cold Iron—must be master of men all!’

*‘Crowns are for the valiant—sceptres for the bold!  
Thrones and powers for mighty men who dare to take and  
hold!’*

‘Nay!’ said the Baron, kneeling in his hall,

‘But Iron—Cold Iron—is master of men all!’

Iron out of Calvary is master of men all!’

### ‘MY NEW-CUT ASHLAR’

*(L’Envoi to ‘Life’s Handicap’)*

My new-cut ashlar takes the light  
Where crimson-blank the windows flare.  
By my own work before the night,  
Great Overseer, I make my prayer.

If there be good in that I wrought  
Thy Hand compelled it, Master, Thine—  
Where I have failed to meet Thy Thought  
know, through Thee, the blame was mine.

One instant's toil to Thee denied  
Stands all Eternity's offence.  
Of that I did with Thee to guide,  
To Thee, through Thee, be excellence.

The depth and dream of my desire,  
The bitter paths wherein I stray—  
Thou knowest Who hast made the Fire,  
Thou knowest Who hast made the Clay.

Who, lest all thought of Eden fade,  
Bring'st Eden to the craftsman's brain—  
Godlike to muse o'er his own Trade  
And manlike stand with God again!

One stone the more swings into place  
In that dread Temple of Thy worth.  
It is enough that, through Thy Grace,  
I saw nought common on Thy Earth.

Take not that vision from my ken—  
Oh, whatsoe'er may spoil or speed.  
Help me to need no aid from men  
That I may help such men as need!

‘NON NOBIS DOMINE!’

(*Written for ‘The Pageant of Parliament,’ 1934*)

*N*on nobis Domine!—  
Not unto us, O Lord!  
The Praise or Glory be  
Of any deed or word;

For in Thy Judgment lies  
To crown or bring to nought  
All knowledge or device  
That Man has reached or wrought.

And we confess our blame—  
How all too high we hold  
That noise which men call Fame,  
That dross which men call Gold.  
For these we undergo  
Our hot and godless days,  
But in our hearts we know  
Not unto us the Praise.

O Power by Whom we live—  
Creator, Judge, and Friend,  
Upholdingly forgive  
Nor fail us at the end:  
But grant us well to see  
In all our piteous ways—  
*Non nobis Domine!*—  
Not unto us the Praise!

## THE WASTER

1930

From the date that the doors of his prep-school close  
On the lonely little son  
He is taught by precept, insult, and blows  
The Things that Are Never Done.  
Year after year, without favour or fear,  
From seven to twenty-two,  
His keepers insist he shall learn the list  
Of the things no fellow can do.

(They are not so strict with the average Pict  
And it isn't set to, etc.)

For this and not for the profit it brings  
Or the good of his fellow-kind  
He is and suffers unspeakable things  
In body and soul and mind.  
But the net result of that Primitive Cult,  
Whatever else may be won,  
Is definite knowledge ere leaving College  
Of the Things that Are Never Done.  
(An interdict which is strange to the Pict  
And was never revealed to, etc.)

Slack by training and slow by birth,  
Only quick to despise,  
Largely assessing his neighbour's worth  
By the hue of his socks or ties,  
A loafer-in-grain, his foes maintain,  
And how shall we combat their view  
When, atop of his natural sloth, he holds  
There are Things no Fellow can do?  
(Which is why he is licked from the first by the Pict  
And left at the post by, etc.)

## HARP SONG OF THE DANE WOMEN

(‘The Knights of the Joyous Venture’—

*Puck of Pook's Hill*)

What is a woman that you forsake her,  
And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,  
To go with the old grey Widow-maker?

She has no house to lay a guest in—  
But one chill bed for all to rest in,  
That the pale suns and the stray bergs nest in.

She has no strong white arms to fold you,  
But the ten-times-fingering weed to hold you—  
Out on the rocks where the tide has rolled you.

Yet, when the signs of summer thicken,  
And the ice breaks, and the birch-buds quicken,  
Yearly you turn from our side, and sicken—

Sicken again for the shouts and the slaughters.  
You steal away to the lapping waters,  
And look at your ship in her winter-quarters.

You forget our mirth, and talk at the tables,  
The kine in the shed and the horse in the stables—  
To pitch her sides and go over her cables.

Then you drive out where the storm-clouds swallow,  
And the sound of your oar-blades, falling hollow,  
Is all we have left through the months to follow.

Ah, what is Woman that you forsake her,  
And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,  
To go with the old grey Widow-maker?

### A ST. HELENA LULLABY

(‘A Priest in spite of Himself’—*Rewards and Fairies*)

‘How far is St. Helena from a little child at play?’  
What makes you want to wander there with all the  
world between?

Oh, Mother, call your son again or else he’ll run away.  
(*No one thinks of winter when the grass is green!*)



‘How far is St. Helena from a fight in Paris Street?’  
I haven’t time to answer now—the men are falling fast.  
The guns begin to thunder, and the drums begin to beat.  
*(If you take the first step, you will take the last!)*

‘How far is St. Helena from the field of Austerlitz?’  
You couldn’t hear me if I told—so loud the cannon roar.  
But not so far for people who are living by their wits.  
*(‘Gay go up’ means ‘Gay go down’ the wide world o’er!)*

‘How far is St. Helena from an Emperor of France?’  
I cannot see—I cannot tell—the Crowns they dazzle so.  
The Kings sit down to dinner, and the Queens stand up to  
dance.  
*(After open weather you may look for snow!)*

‘How far is St. Helena from the Capes of Trafalgar?’  
A longish way—a longish way—with ten year more to run.  
It’s South across the water underneath a falling star.  
*(What you cannot finish you must leave undone!)*

‘How far is St. Helena from the Beresina ice?’  
An ill way—a chill way—the ice begins to crack.  
But not so far for gentlemen who never took advice.  
*(When you can’t go forward you must e’en come back!)*

‘How far is St. Helena from the field of Waterloo?’  
A near way—a clear way—the ship will take you soon  
A pleasant place for gentlemen with little left to do.  
*(Morning never tries you till the afternoon!)*

‘How far from St. Helena to the Gate of Heaven’s Grace?’  
That no one knows—that no one knows—and no one ever  
will.  
But fold your hands across your heart and cover up your  
face,  
And after all your trapesings, child, lie still!

## ROAD-SONG OF THE BANDAR-LOG

(‘Kaa’s Hunting’—*The Jungle Book*)

Here we go in a flung festoon,  
Half-way up to the jealous moon!  
Don’t you envy our pranceful bands?  
Don’t you wish you had extra hands?  
Wouldn’t you like if your tails were—so—  
Curved in the shape of a Cupid’s bow?  
Now you’re angry, but—never mind,  
*Brother, thy tail hangs down behind!*

Here we sit in a branchy row,  
Thinking of beautiful things we know;  
Dreaming of deeds that we mean to do,  
All complete, in a minute or two—  
Something noble and grand and good,  
Won by merely wishing we could.  
Now we’re going to—never mind,  
*Brother, thy tail hangs down behind!*

All the talk we ever have heard  
Uttered by bat or beast or bird—  
Hide or fin or scale or feather—  
Jabber it quickly and all together!  
Excellent! Wonderful! Once again!  
Now we are talking just like men.  
Let’s pretend we are . . . Never mind!  
*Brother, thy tail hangs down behind!*  
This is the way of the Monkey-kind!

*Then join our leaping lines that scumfish through the pines,  
That rocket by where, light and high, the wild-grape swings.  
By the rubbish in our wake, and the noble noise we make,  
Be sure—be sure, we’re going to do some splendid things!*

## A BRITISH-ROMAN SONG

(A.D. 406)

(‘A Centurion of the Thirtieth’—*Puck of Pook’s Hill*)

My father’s father saw it not,  
And I, belike, shall never come  
To look on that so-holy spot—  
The very Rome—

Crowned by all Time, all Art, all Might,  
The equal work of Gods and Man,  
City beneath whose oldest height—  
The Race began!

Soon to send forth again a brood,  
Unshakeable, we pray, that clings  
To Rome’s thrice-hammered hardihood—  
In arduous things.

Strong heart with triple armour bound,  
Beat strongly, for thy life-blood runs,  
Age after Age, the Empire round—  
In us thy Sons

Who, distant from the Seven Hills,  
Loving and serving much, require  
Thee—*thee* to guard ’gainst home-born ills  
The Imperial Fire!

## A PICT SONG

(‘The Winged Hats’—*Puck of Pook’s Hill*)

Rome never looks where she treads.  
Always her heavy hooves fall  
On our stomachs, our hearts or our heads;  
And Rome never heeds when we bawl.  
Her sentries pass on—that is all,  
And we gather behind them in hordes,  
And plot to reconquer the Wall,  
With only our tongues for our swords.

We are the Little Folk—we!  
Too little to love or to hate.  
Leave us alone and you’ll see  
How we can drag down the State!  
We are the worm in the wood!  
We are the rot at the root!  
We are the taint in the blood!  
We are the thorn in the foot!

Mistletoe killing an oak—  
Rats gnawing cables in two—  
Moths making holes in a cloak—  
How they must love what they do!  
Yes—and we Little Folk too,  
We are busy as they—  
Working our works out of view—  
Watch, and you’ll see it some day!

No indeed! We are not strong,  
But we know Peoples that are.  
Yes, and we’ll guide them along  
To smash and destroy you in War

*We shall be slaves just the same?  
Yes, we have always been slaves,  
But you—you will die of the shame,  
And then we shall dance on your graves!*

*We are the Little Folk, we, etc.*

## THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE

*(‘How Fear Came’—The Second Jungle Book)*

*Now this is the Law of the Jungle—as old and as true as  
the sky ;  
And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the Wolf  
that shall break it must die.*

*As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk the Law runneth  
forward and back—  
For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of  
the Wolf is the Pack.*

*Wash daily from nose-tip to tail-tip; drink deeply, but  
never too deep;  
And remember the night is for hunting, and forget not the  
day is for sleep.*

*The Jackal may follow the Tiger, but, Cub, when thy  
whiskers are grown,  
Remember the Wolf is a hunter—go forth and get food of  
thine own.*

*Keep peace with the Lords of the Jungle—the Tiger, the  
Panther, the Bear;  
And trouble not Hathi the Silent, and mock not the Boar  
in his lair.*



When Pack meets with Pack in the Jungle, and neither will  
go from the trail,  
Lie down till the leaders have spoken—it may be fair words  
shall prevail.

When ye fight with a Wolf of the Pack, ye must fight him  
alone and afar,  
Lest others take part in the quarrel, and the Pack be  
diminished by war.

The Lair of the Wolf is his refuge, and where he has made  
him his home,  
Not even the Head Wolf may enter, not even the Council  
may come.

The Lair of the Wolf is his refuge, but where he has dug  
it too plain,  
The Council shall send him a message, and so he shall  
change it again.

If ye kill before midnight, be silent, and wake not the  
woods with your bay,  
Lest ye frighten the deer from the crops, and the brothers  
go empty away.

Ye may kill for yourselves, and your mates, and your cubs  
as they need, and ye can;  
But kill not for pleasure of killing, and *seven times never*  
*kill Man!*

If ye plunder his Kill from a weaker, devour not all in thy  
pride;  
Pack-Right is the right of the meanest; so leave him the  
head and the hide.

The Kill of the Pack is the meat of the Pack. Ye must eat  
where it lies ;  
And no one may carry away of that meat to his lair, or he  
dies.

The Kill of the Wolf is the meat of the Wolf. He may do  
what he will,  
But, till he has given permission, the Pack may not eat of  
that Kill.

Cub-Right is the right of the Yearling. From all of his  
Pack he may claim  
Full-gorge when the killer has eaten ; and none may refuse  
him the same.

Lair-Right is the right of the Mother. From all of her year  
she may claim  
One haunch of each kill for her litter ; and none may deny  
her the same.

Cave-Right is the right of the Father—to hunt by himself  
for his own :  
He is freed of all calls to the Pack ; he is judged by the  
Council alone.

Because of his age and his cunning, because of his gripe  
and his paw,  
In all that the Law leaveth open, the word of the Head  
Wolf is Law.

*Now these are the Laws of the Jungle, and many and mighty  
are they ;  
But the head and the hoof of the Law and the haunch and the  
hump is—Obey !*

## MACDONOUGH'S SONG

(‘As Easy as A B C’—*A Diversity of Creatures*)

Whether the State can loose and bind  
In Heaven as well as on Earth:  
If it be wiser to kill mankind  
Before or after the birth—  
These are matters of high concern  
Where State-kept schoolmen are;  
But Holy State (we have lived to learn)  
Endeth in Holy War.

Whether The People be led by The Lord,  
Or lured by the loudest throat:  
If it be quicker to die by the sword  
Or cheaper to die by vote—  
These are things we have dealt with once,  
(And they will not rise from their grave)  
For Holy People, however it runs,  
Endeth in wholly Slave.

Whatsoever, for any cause,  
Seeketh to take or give  
Power above or beyond the Laws,  
Suffer it not to live!  
Holy State or Holy King—  
Or Holy People's Will—  
Have no truck with the senseless thing.  
Order the guns and kill!  
Saying—after—me:—

*Once there was The People—Terror gave it birth;  
Once there was The People and it made a Hell of Earth.  
Earth arose and crushed it. Listen, O ye slain!  
Once there was The People—it shall never be again!*

## THE HERITAGE

Our Fathers in a wondrous age,  
Ere yet the Earth was small,  
Ensured to us an heritage,  
And doubted not at all  
That we, the children of their heart,  
Which then did beat so high,  
In later time should play like part  
For our posterity.

A thousand years they steadfast built,  
To 'vantage us and ours,  
The Walls that were a world's despair,  
The sea-constraining Towers:  
Yet in their midmost pride they knew,  
And unto Kings made known,  
Not all from these their strength they drew,  
Their faith from brass or stone.

Youth's passion, manhood's fierce intent.  
With age's judgment wise,  
They spent, and counted not they spent,  
At daily sacrifice.  
Not lambs alone nor purchased doves  
Or tithe of trader's gold—  
Their lives most dear, their dearer loves,  
They offered up of old.

Refraining e'en from lawful things,  
They bowed the neck to bear  
The unadornèd yoke that brings  
Stark toil and sternest care.  
Wherefore through them is Freedom sure;  
Wherefore through them we stand,  
From all but sloth and pride secure,  
In a delightsome land.

Then, fretful, murmur not they gave  
So great a charge to keep,  
Nor dream that awestruck Time shall save  
Their labour while we sleep.  
Dear-bought and clear, a thousand year,  
Our fathers' title runs.  
Make we likewise their sacrifice,  
Defrauding not our sons.

## SONG OF THE FIFTH RIVER

(‘The Treasure and the Law’—*Puck of Pook's Hill*)

When first by Eden Tree  
The Four Great Rivers ran,  
To each was appointed a Man  
Her Prince and Ruler to be.

But after this was ordained  
(The ancient legends tell),  
There came dark Israel,  
For whom no River remained.

Then He Whom the Rivers obey  
Said to him: ‘Fling on the ground  
A handful of yellow clay,  
And a Fifth Great River shall run,  
Mightier than these Four,  
In secret the Earth around;  
And Her secret evermore  
Shall be shown to thee and thy Race.’

So it was said and done.  
And, deep in the veins of Earth,  
And, fed by a thousand springs  
That comfort the market-place,



Or sap the power of Kings,  
The Fifth Great River had birth,  
Even as it was foretold—  
The Secret River of Gold!

And Israel laid down  
His sceptre and his crown,  
To brood on that River bank,  
Where the waters flashed and sank  
And burrowed in earth and fell,  
And bided a season below,  
For reason that none might know,  
Save only Israel.

He is Lord of the Last—  
The Fifth, most wonderful, Flood.  
He hears Her thunder past  
And Her Song is in his blood.  
He can foresay: 'She will fall,'  
For he knows which fountain dries  
Behind which desert-belt  
A thousand leagues to the South.

He can foresay: 'She will rise.'  
He knows what far snows melt  
Along what mountain-wall  
A thousand leagues to the North.  
He snuffs the coming drouth  
As he snuffs the coming rain,  
He knows what each will bring forth,  
And turns it to his gain.

A Ruler without a Throne,  
A Prince without a Sword,  
Israel follows his quest.  
In every land a guest,

Of many lands a lord,  
In no land King is he.  
But the Fifth Great River keeps  
The secret of Her deeps  
For Israel alone.  
As it was ordered to be.

## THE CHILDREN'S SONG

*(Puck of Pook's Hill)*

Land of our Birth, we pledge to thee  
Our love and toil in the years to be;  
When we are grown and take our place  
As men and women with our race.

Father in Heaven who lovest all,  
Oh, help Thy children when they call;  
That they may build from age to age  
An undefiled heritage.

Teach us to bear the yoke in youth,  
With steadfastness and careful truth;  
That, in our time, Thy Grace may give  
The Truth whereby the Nations live.

Teach us to rule ourselves alway,  
Controlled and cleanly night and day;  
That we may bring, if need arise,  
No maimed or worthless sacrifice.

Teach us to look in all our ends  
On Thee for judge, and not our friends;  
That we, with Thee, may walk uncowed  
By fear or favour of the crowd.

Teach us the Strength that cannot seek,  
By deed or thought, to hurt the weak;  
That, under Thee, we may possess  
Man's strength to comfort man's distress.

Teach us Delight in simple things,  
And Mirth that has no bitter springs;  
Forgiveness free of evil done,  
And Love to all men 'neath the sun!

*Land of our Birth, our faith, our pride,  
For whose dear sake our fathers died;  
Oh, Motherland, we pledge to thee  
Head, heart, and hand through the years to be!*

### IF—

(‘Brother Square-Toes’—*Rewards and Fairies*)

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master  
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools.  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

## A TRANSLATION

HORACE, Bk. V, Ode 3

('Regulus'—*A Diversity of Creatures*)

There are whose study is of smells,  
And to attentive schools rehearse  
How something mixed with something else  
Makes something worse.

Some cultivate in broths impure  
The clients of our body—these,  
Increasing without Venus, cure,  
Or cause, disease.

Others the heated wheel extol,  
And all its offspring, whose concern  
Is how to make it farthest roll  
And fastest turn.

Me, much incurious if the hour  
Present, or to be paid for, brings  
Me to Brundusium by the power  
Of wheels or wings ;

Me, in whose breast no flame hath burned  
Life-long, save that by Pindar lit,  
Such lore leaves cold. I am not turned  
Aside to it

More than when, sunk in thought profound  
Of what the unaltering Gods require,  
My steward (friend but slave) brings round  
Logs for my fire.

## THE LAND

(‘Friendly Brook’—*A Diversity of Creatures*)

When Julius Fabricius, Sub-Prefect of the Weald,  
In the days of Diocletian owned our Lower River-  
field,  
He called to him Hobdenius—a Briton of the Clay,  
Saying: ‘What about that River-piece for layin’ in to  
hay?’

And the aged Hobden answered: ‘I remember as a lad  
My father told your father that she wanted dreenin’ bad.



An' the more that you neeglect her the less you'll get her  
clean.

Have it jest *as* you've a mind to, but, if I was you, I'd  
dreen.'

So they drained it long and crossways in the lavish Roman  
style—

Still we find among the river-drift their flakes of ancient  
tile,

And in drouthy middle August, when the bones of  
meadows show,

We can trace the lines they followed sixteen hundred years  
ago.

Then Julius Fabricius died as even Prefects do,

And after certain centuries, Imperial Rome died too.

Then did robbers enter Britain from across the Northern  
main

And our Lower River-field was won by Ogier the Dane.

Well could Ogier work his war-boat—well could Ogier  
wield his brand—

Much he knew of foaming waters—not so much of farm-  
ing land.

So he called to him a Hobden of the old unaltered blood,  
Saying: 'What about that River-piece; she doesn't look  
no good?'

And that aged Hobden answered: "'Tain't for *me* to  
interfere,

But I've known that bit o' meadow now for five and fifty  
year.

Have it *jest* as you've a mind to, but I've proved it time on  
time,

If you want to change her nature you have *got* to give  
her lime!'

Ogier sent his wains to Lewes, twenty hours' solemn walk,  
And drew back great abundance of the cool, grey, healing  
chalk,

And old Hobden spread it broadcast, never heeding what  
was in't.—

Which is why in cleaning ditches, now and then we find a  
flint.

Ogier died. His sons grew English—Anglo-Saxon was  
their name—

Till out of blossomed Normandy another pirate came;  
For Duke William conquered England and divided with  
his men,

And our Lower River-field he gave to William of Warenne.

But the Brook (you know her habit) rose one rainy autumn  
night

And tore down sodden flitches of the bank to left and  
right.

So, said William to his Bailiff as they rode their dripping  
rounds:

'Hob, what about that River-bit—the Brook's got up no  
bounds?'

And that aged Hobden answered: "'Tain't my business to  
advise,

But ye might ha' known 'twould happen from the way the  
valley lies.

Where ye can't hold back the water you must try and save  
the sile.

Hev it jest as you've a *mind* to, but, if I was you, I'd spile!'

They spiled along the water-course with trunks of willow-  
trees,

And planks of elms behind 'em and immortal oaken knees.

And when the spates of Autumn whirl the gravel-beds  
away

You can see their faithful fragments, iron-hard in iron clay.

*Georgii Quinti Anno Sexto*, I, who own the River-field,  
Am fortified with title-deeds, attested, signed and sealed,  
Guaranteeing me, my assigns, my executors and heirs  
All sorts of powers and profits which—are neither mine  
nor theirs.

I have rights of chase and warren, as my dignity requires.  
I can fish—but Hobden tickles. I can shoot—but Hobden  
wires.

I repair, but he reopens, certain gaps which, men allege,  
Have been used by every Hobden since a Hobden swapped  
a hedge.

Shall I dog his morning progress o'er the track-betraying  
dew?

Demand his dinner-basket into which my pheasant flew?  
Confiscate his evening faggot under which my conies ran,  
And summons him to judgment? I would sooner sum-  
mons Pan.

His dead are in the churchyard—thirty generations laid.  
Their names were old in history when Domesday Book  
was made;

And the passion and the piety and prowess of his line  
Have seeded, rooted, fruited in some land the Law calls  
mine.

Not for any beast that burrows, not for any bird that flies,  
Would I lose his large sound counsel, miss his keen amend-  
ing eyes.

He is bailiff, woodman, wheelwright, field-surveyor,  
engineer,

And if flagrantly a poacher—'tain't for me to interfere.

‘Hob, what about that River-bit?’ I turn to him again,  
With Fabricius and Ogier and William of Warrenne.  
‘Hev it jest as you’ve a mind to, *but*’—and here he takes  
command.  
For whoever pays the taxes old Mus’ Hobden owns the  
land.

## THE QUEEN’S MEN

(‘Gloriana’—*Rewards and Fairies*)

Valour and Innocence  
Have latterly gone hence  
To certain death by certain shame attended.  
Envy—ah! even to tears!—  
The fortune of their years  
Which, though so few, yet so divinely ended.

Scarce had they lifted up  
Life’s full and fiery cup,  
Than they had set it down untouched before them.  
Before their day arose  
They beckoned it to close—  
Close in confusion and destruction o’er them.

They did not stay to ask  
What prize should crown their task—  
Well sure that prize was such as no man strives for;  
But passed into eclipse,  
Her kiss upon their lips—  
Even Belphebe’s, whom they gave their lives for!

## MINE SWEEPERS

1914-18

(*Sea Warfare*)

Dawn off the Foreland—the young flood making  
Jumbled and short and steep—  
Black in the hollows and bright where it's breaking—  
Awkward water to sweep.  
‘Mines reported in the fairway,  
‘Warn all traffic and detain.  
“Sent up *Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormcock, and Golden Gain.*’

Noon off the Foreland—the first ebb making  
Lumpy and strong in the bight.  
Boom after boom, and the golf-hut shaking  
And the jackdaws wild with fright!  
‘Mines located in the fairway,  
‘Boats now working up the chain,  
‘Sweepers—*Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormcock, and Golden Gain.*’

Dusk off the Foreland—the last light going  
And the traffic crowding through,  
And five damned trawlers with their syreens blowing  
Heading the whole review!  
‘Sweep completed in the fairway.  
‘No more mines remain.  
“Sent back *Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormcock, and Golden Gain.*’



THE LOVE SONG OF HAR DYAL  
(‘Beyond the Pale’—*Plain Tales from the Hills*)

Alone upon the housetops to the North  
I turn and watch the lightnings in the sky—  
The glamour of thy footsteps in the North.  
*Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!*

Below my feet the still bazar is laid—  
Far, far below the weary camels lie—  
The camels and the captives of thy raid.  
*Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!*

My father’s wife is old and harsh with years,  
And drudge of all my father’s house am I—  
My bread is sorrow and my drink is tears.  
*Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!*

MOWGLI’S SONG AGAINST PEOPLE  
(‘Letting in the Jungle’—*The Second Jungle Book*)

I will let loose against you the fleet-footed vines—  
I will call in the Jungle to stamp out your lines!  
The roofs shall fade before it,  
The house-beams shall fall;  
And the *Karela*,<sup>1</sup> the bitter *Karela*,  
Shall cover it all!

In the gates of these your councils my people shall sing.  
In the doors of these your garner the Bat-folk shall cling;  
And the snake shall be your watchman,  
By a hearthstone unswept;  
For the *Karela*, the bitter *Karela*,  
Shall fruit where ye slept!

<sup>1</sup> A wild melon.

Ye shall not see my strikers ; ye shall hear them and guess.  
By night, before the moon-rise, I will send for my cess,  
And the wolf shall be your herdsman  
By a landmark removed ;  
For the *Karela*, the bitter *Karela*,  
Shall seed where ye loved !

I will reap your fields before you at the hands of a host.  
Ye shall glean behind my reapers for the bread that is  
lost ;  
And the deer shall be your oxen  
On a headland untilled ;  
For the *Karela*, the bitter *Karela*,  
Shall leaf where ye build !

I have untied against you the club-footed vines—  
I have sent in the Jungle to swamp out your lines!  
The trees—the trees are on you!  
The house-beams shall fall ;  
And the *Karela*, the bitter *Karela*,  
Shall cover you all !

## ‘THE TRADE’

1914–18

(*Sea Warfare*)

They bear, in place of classic names,  
Letters and numbers on their skin.  
They play their grisly blindfold games  
In little boxes made of tin.  
Sometimes they stalk the Zeppelin,  
Sometimes they learn where mines are laid,  
Or where the Baltic ice is thin.  
That is the custom of ‘The Trade’.

Few prize-courts sit upon their claims.  
They seldom tow their targets in.  
They follow certain secret aims  
Down under, far from strife or din.  
When they are ready to begin  
No flag is flown, no fuss is made  
More than the shearing of a pin.  
That is the custom of 'The Trade'.

The Scout's quadruple funnel flames  
A mark from Sweden to the Swin,  
The Cruiser's thund'rous screw proclaims  
Her comings out and goings in:  
But only whiffs of paraffin  
Or creamy rings that fizz and fade  
Show where the one-eyed Death has been.  
That is the custom of 'The Trade'.

Their feats, their fortunes and their fames  
Are hidden from their nearest kin;  
No eager public backs or blames,  
No journal prints the yarn they spin  
(The Censor would not let it in!)  
When they return from run or raid.  
Unheard they work, unseen they win.  
That is the custom of 'The Trade'.

## THE RUNES ON WELAND'S SWORD

1906

('Old Men at Pevensy'—*Puck of Pook's Hill*)

A Smith makes me  
To betray my Man  
In my first fight.

To gather Gold  
At the world's end  
I am sent.

The Gold I gather  
Comes into England  
Out of deep Water.

Like a shining Fish  
Then it descends  
Into deep Water.

It is not given  
For goods or gear,  
But for The Thing.

The Gold I gather  
A king covets  
For an ill use.

The Gold I gather  
Is drawn up  
Out of deep Water.

Like a shining Fish  
Then it descends  
Into deep Water.

It is not given  
For goods or gear,  
But for The Thing.

## SONG OF THE GALLEY-SLAVES

(“The Finest Story in the World”—*Many Inventions*)

**W**e pulled for you when the wind was against us and  
the sails were low.

*Will you never let us go?*

We ate bread and onions when you took towns, or ran  
aboard quickly when you were beaten back by the  
foe.

The Captains walked up and down the deck in fair weather  
singing songs, but we were below.

We fainted with our chins on the oars and you did not see  
that we were idle, for we still swung to and fro.

*Will you never let us go?*

The salt made the oar-handles like shark-skin; our knees  
were cut to the bone with salt-cracks; our hair was  
stuck to our foreheads; and our lips were cut to  
the gums, and you whipped us because we could  
not row.

*Will you never let us go?*

But, in a little time, we shall run out of the port-holes as  
the water runs along the oar-blade, and though you  
tell the others to row after us you will never catch  
us till you catch the oar-thresh and tie up the winds  
in the belly of the sail. Aho!

*Will you never let us go?*

## THE ROMAN CENTURION'S SONG

(ROMAN OCCUPATION OF BRITAIN, A.D. 300)

**L**egate, I had the news last night—my cohort ordered  
home

By ship to Portus Itius and thence by road to Rome



I've marched the companies aboard, the arms are stowed  
below:

Now let another take my sword. Command me not to go!

I've served in Britain forty years, from Vectis to the  
Wall.

I have none other home than this, nor any life at all.

Last night I did not understand, but, now the hour draws  
near

That calls me to my native land, I feel that land is here.

Here where men say my name was made, here where my  
work was done;

Here where my dearest dead are laid—my wife—my wife  
and son;

Here where time, custom, grief and toil, age, memory,  
service, love,

Have rooted me in British soil. Ah, how can I remove?

For me this land, that sea, these airs, those folk and fields  
suffice.

What purple Southern pomp can match our changeful  
Northern skies,

Black with December snows unshed or pearled with  
August haze—

The clanging arch of steel-grey March, or June's long-  
lighted days?

You'll follow widening Rhodanus till vine and olive  
lean

Aslant before the sunny breeze that sweeps Nemausus  
clean

To Arelate's triple gate; but let me linger on,

Here where our stiff-necked British oaks confront Euro-  
clydon!

You'll take the old Aurelian Road through shore-descending pines  
Where, blue as any peacock's neck, the Tyrrhene Ocean shines.  
You'll go where laurel crowns are won, but—will you e'er forget.  
The scent of hawthorn in the sun, or bracken in the wet?  
Let me work here for Britain's sake—at any task you will—  
A marsh to drain, a road to make or native troops to drill.  
Some Western camp (I know the Pict) or granite Border keep,  
Mid seas of heather derelict, where our old messmates sleep..

Legate, I come to you in tears—My cohort ordered home!  
I've served in Britain forty years. What should I do in Rome?

Here is my heart, my soul, my mind—the only life I know.  
I cannot leave it all behind. Command me not to go!

## DANE-GELD

(A.D. 980–1016)

It is always a temptation to an armed and agile nation  
To call upon a neighbour and to say:—  
'We invaded you last night—we are quite prepared to fight,  
Unless you pay us cash to go away.'

And that is called asking for Dane-geld,  
And the people who ask it explain  
That you've only to pay 'em the Dane-geld  
And then you'll get rid of the Dane!

It is always a temptation to a rich and lazy nation,  
To puff and look important and to say:—  
'Though we know we should defeat you, we have not the  
time to meet you.

We will therefore pay you cash to go away.'

And that is called paying the Dane-geld;  
But we've proved it again and again,  
That if once you have paid him the Dane-geld  
You never get rid of the Dane.

It is wrong to put temptation in the path of any nation,  
For fear they should succumb and go astray;  
So when you are requested to pay up or be molested,  
You will find it better policy to say:—

'We never pay *any*-one Dane-geld,  
No matter how trifling the cost;  
For the end of that game is oppression and shame,  
And the nation that plays it is lost!'

## NORMAN AND SAXON

(A.D. 1100)

'My son,' said the Norman Baron, 'I am dying, and  
you will be heir  
To all the broad acres in England that William gave me  
for my share  
When we conquered the Saxon at Hastings, and a nice  
little handful it is.  
But before you go over to rule it I want you to understand  
this:—

'The Saxon is not like us Normans. His manners are not so polite.

But he never means anything serious till he talks about justice and right.

When he stands like an ox in the furrow with his sullen set eyes on your own,

And grumbles, "This isn't fair dealing," my son, leave the Saxon alone.

'You can horsewhip your Gascony archers, or torture your Picardy spears;

But don't try that game on the Saxon; you'll have the whole brood round your ears.

From the richest old Thane in the county to the poorest chained serf in the field,

They'll be at you and on you like hornets, and, if you are wise, you will yield.

'But first you must master their language, their dialect, proverbs and songs.

Don't trust any clerk to interpret when they come with the tale of their wrongs.

Let them know that you know what they're saying; let them feel that you know what to say.

Yes, even when you want to go hunting, hear 'em out if it takes you all day.

'They'll drink every hour of the daylight and poach every hour of the dark.

It's the sport not the rabbits they're after (we've plenty of game in the park).

Don't hang them or cut off their fingers. That's wasteful as well as unkind,

For a hard-bitten, South-country poacher makes the best man-at-arms you can find.

‘ Appear with your wife and the children at their weddings  
and funerals and feasts.  
Be polite but not friendly to Bishops ; be good to all poor  
parish priests.  
Say “we,” “us” and “ours” when you’re talking, instead  
of “you fellows” and “I.”  
Don’t ride over seeds ; keep your temper ; and *never you  
tell ’em a lie!*’

## EDGEHILL FIGHT (CIVIL WARS, 1642)

Naked and grey the Cotswolds stand  
Beneath the autumn sun,  
And the stubble-fields on either hand  
Where Stour and Avon run.  
There is no change in the patient land  
That has bred us every one.

She should have passed in cloud and fire  
And saved us from this sin  
Of war—red war—’twixt child and sire,  
Household and kith and kin,  
In the heart of a sleepy Midland shire,  
With the harvest scarcely in.

But there is no change as we meet at last  
On the brow-head or the plain,  
And the raw astonished ranks stand fast  
To slay or to be slain  
By the men they knew in the kindly past  
That shall never come again—



By the men they met at dance or chase,  
In the tavern or the hall,  
At the justice-bench and the market-place,  
At the cudgel-play or brawl—  
Of their own blood and speech and race,  
Comrades or neighbours all!

More bitter than death this day must prove  
Whichever way it go,  
For the brothers of the maids we love  
Make ready to lay low  
Their sisters' sweethearts, as we move  
Against our dearest foe.

Thank Heaven! At last the trumpets peal  
Before our strength gives way.  
For King or for the Commonweal—  
No matter which they say,  
The first dry rattle of new-drawn steel  
Changes the world to-day!

## THE DUTCH IN THE MEDWAY (1664-72)

If wars were won by feasting,  
Or victory by song,  
Or safety found in sleeping sound,  
How England would be strong!  
But honour and dominion  
Are not maintained so.  
They're only got by sword and shot,  
*And this the Dutchmen know!*

The moneys that should feed us  
You spend on your delight,  
How can you then have sailor-men  
To aid you in your fight?  
Our fish and cheese are rotten,  
Which makes the scurvy grow—  
We cannot serve you if we starve,  
*And this the Dutchmen know!*

Our ships in every harbour  
Be neither whole nor sound,  
And when we seek to mend a leak,  
No oakum can be found;  
Or, if it is, the caulkers,  
And carpenters also,  
For lack of pay have gone away,  
*And this the Dutchmen know!*

Mere powder, guns, and bullets,  
We scarce can get at all;  
Their price was spent in merriment  
And revel at Whitehall,  
While we in tattered doublets  
From ship to ship must row,  
Beseeching friends for odds and ends—  
*And this the Dutchmen know!*

No King will heed our warnings,  
No Court will pay our claims—  
Our King and Court for their disport  
Do sell the very Thames!  
For, now De Ruyter's topsails  
Off naked Chatham show,  
We dare not meet him with our fleet—  
*And this the Dutchmen know!*

## THE SECRET OF THE MACHINES

### (MODERN MACHINERY)

We were taken from the ore-bed and the mine,  
We were melted in the furnace and the pit—  
We were cast and wrought and hammered to design,  
We were cut and filed and tooled and gauged to fit.  
Some water, coal, and oil is all we ask,  
And a thousandth of an inch to give us play:  
And now, if you will set us to our task,  
We will serve you four and twenty hours a day!

We can pull and haul and push and lift and drive,  
We can print and plough and weave and heat and  
light,  
We can run and race and swim and fly and dive,  
We can see and hear and count and read and write!

Would you call a friend from half across the world?  
If you'll let us have his name and town and state,  
You shall see and hear your crackling question hurled  
Across the arch of heaven while you wait.  
Has he answered? Does he need you at his side?  
You can start this very evening if you choose,  
And take the Western Ocean in the stride  
Of seventy thousand horses and some screws!

The boat-express is waiting your command!  
You will find the *Mauretania* at the quay,  
Till her captain turns the lever 'neath his hand,  
And the monstrous nine-decked city goes to sea.

Do you wish to make the mountains bare their head  
And lay their new-cut forests at your feet?  
Do you want to turn a river in its bed,  
Or plant a barren wilderness with wheat?

Shall we pipe aloft and bring you water down  
From the never-failing cisterns of the snows,  
To work the mills and tramways in your town,  
And irrigate your orchards as it flows?

It is easy! Give us dynamite and drills!  
Watch the iron-shouldered rocks lie down and quake,  
As the thirsty desert-level floods and fills,  
And the valley we have dammed becomes a lake.

But remember, please, the Law by which we live,  
We are not built to comprehend a lie,  
We can neither love nor pity nor forgive.  
If you make a slip in handling us you die!  
We are greater than the Peoples or the Kings—  
Be humble, as you crawl beneath our rods!—  
Our touch can alter all created things,  
We are everything on earth—except The Gods!

*Though our smoke may hide the Heavens from your  
eyes,  
It will vanish and the stars will shine again,  
Because, for all our power and weight and size,  
We are nothing more than children of your brain!*

## GERTRUDE'S PRAYER

(‘Dayspring Mishandled’)

That which is marred at birth Time shall not mend,  
Nor water out of bitter well make clean;  
All evil thing returneth at the end,  
Or elseway walketh in our blood unseen.  
Whereby the more is sorrow in certaine—  
Dayspring mishandled cometh not againe.

To-bruizèd be that slender, sterting spray  
Out of the oake's rind that should betide  
A branch of girt and goodliness, straightway  
Her spring is turnèd on herself, and wried  
And knotted like some gall or veiney wen.—  
Dayspring mishandled cometh not agen.

Noontide repayeth never morning-bliss—  
Sith noon to morn is incomparable;  
And, so it be our dawning goth amiss,  
None other after-hour serveth well.  
Ah! Jesu-Moder, pitie my oe paine—  
Dayspring mishandled cometh not againe !

## THE GODS OF THE COPYBOOK HEADINGS

1919

As I pass through my incarnations in every age and  
race,  
I make my proper prostrations to the Gods of the Market-  
Place.  
Peering through reverent fingers I watch them flourish and  
fall,  
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings, I notice, outlast  
them all.

We were living in trees when they met us. They showed us  
each in turn  
That Water would certainly wet us, as Fire would certainly  
burn:  
But we found them lacking in Uplift, Vision and Breadth  
of Mind,  
So we left them to teach the Gorillas while we followed  
the March of Mankind.



We moved as the Spirit listed. *They* never altered their  
pace,  
Being neither cloud nor wind-borne like the Gods of the  
Market-Place;  
But they always caught up with our progress, and presently  
word would come  
That a tribe had been wiped off its icefield, or the lights  
had gone out in Rome.

With the Hopes that our World is built on they were  
utterly out of touch,  
They denied that the Moon was Stilton; they denied she  
was even Dutch.  
They denied that Wishes were Horses; they denied that a  
Pig had Wings.  
So we worshipped the Gods of the Market Who promised  
these beautiful things.

When the Cambrian measures were forming, They prom-  
ised perpetual peace.  
They swore, if we gave them our weapons, that the wars of  
the tribes would cease.  
But when we disarmed They sold us and delivered us  
bound to our foe,  
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings said: '*Stick to  
the Devil you know.*'

On the first Feminian Sandstones we were promised the  
Fuller Life  
(Which started by loving our neighbour and ended by  
loving his wife)  
Till our women had no more children and the men lost  
reason and faith,  
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings said: '*The  
Wages of Sin is Death.*'

In the Carboniferous Epoch we were promised abundance  
for all,  
By robbing selected Peter to pay for collective Paul;  
But, though we had plenty of money, there was nothing  
our money could buy,  
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings said: '*If you  
don't work you die.*'

Then the Gods of the Market tumbled, and their smooth-  
tongued wizards withdrew,  
And the hearts of the meanest were humbled and began to  
believe it was true  
That All is not Gold that Glitters, and Two and Two  
make Four—  
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings limped up to  
explain it once more.

. . . . .

As it will be in the future, it was at the birth of Man—  
There are only four things certain since Social Progress  
began:—  
That the Dog returns to his Vomit and the Sow returns to  
her Mire,  
And the burnt Fool's bandaged finger goes wabbling back  
to the Fire;

And that after this is accomplished, and the brave new  
world begins  
When all men are paid for existing and no man must pay  
for his sins,  
As surely as Water will wet us, as surely as Fire will burn,  
The Gods of the Copybook Headings with terror and  
slaughter return!

## THE STORM CONE

1932

This is the midnight—let no star  
Delude us—dawn is very far.  
This is the tempest long foretold—  
Slow to make head but sure to hold.

Stand by! The lull 'twixt blast and blast  
Signals the storm is near, not past;  
And worse than present jeopardy  
May our forlorn to-morrow be.

If we have cleared the expectant reef,  
Let no man look for his relief.  
Only the darkness hides the shape  
Of further peril to escape.

It is decreed that we abide  
The weight of gale against the tide  
And those huge waves the outer main  
Sends in to set us back again.

They fall and whelm. We strain to hear  
The pulses of her labouring gear,  
Till the deep throb beneath us proves,  
After each shudder and check, she moves!

She moves, with all save purpose lost,  
To make her offing from the coast;  
But, till she fetches open sea,  
Let no man deem that he is free!

## THE APPEAL

*IF I HAVE GIVEN YOU DELIGHT  
BY AUGHT THAT I HAVE DONE,  
LET ME LIE QUIET IN THAT NIGHT  
WHICH SHALL BE YOURS ANON:*

*AND FOR THE LITTLE, LITTLE, SPAN  
THE DEAD ARE BORNE IN MIND,  
SEEK NOT TO QUESTION OTHER THAN  
THE BOOKS I LEAVE BEHIND.*





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